

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION IN AL-GHAZĀLĪ & IBN-RUŠD

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE TWO TAHAFUTS & AL-MAQĀSID

ABDUR RAUF KHAN, M.A.

(P.U.).

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A.R.Khan

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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The problem of creation has a long history in Greek and Christian thought, and in Islam the Mutakallimūn and Falāsifa have equally been preoccupied with it. The doctrine of creation in al-Ghazālī and Averroes, besides being of historical importance, is also of basic interest in philosophy and theology. Metaphysics presented a formidable challenge to Muslim theology, especially in such vital questions, as the creation ex-nihilo, the eternity of matter, the One and many or the unity and multiplicity. The fundamental notions concerning God are unity, His act of creation, and the dependence of all creation on Him for its sustenance. These are stated in the Qur'ān in a manner which is neither philosophical nor dialectical. The philosophers of Islam tried to interpret and reconcile these with the philosophical ideas. In Islam, philosophy found its first field of development in speculative theology, the obvious aim of which was to state the dogmas of the religion so as to bring them into agreement with the demands of contemporary knowledge. With the translations of the Greek or Syriac texts into Arabic, Muslim thinkers became acquainted with the One of Neoplatonic theology, Aristotle's highest Good or the Prime unmoved Mover through The Theology of Aristotle - which has now been recognized as consisting

of extracts from the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus. Writings like these, together with Aristotle's De Anima, Physics, and especially his Metaphysics, embodied rational concepts of God, and the universe, which were at variance with the description of the nature and attributes of God in the Qur'ān. The Falāsifa became the recipients and transmitters of that philosophy. They saw the problem of revelation and reason as a contrast between the divinely revealed law and the human law devised by reason. Thus the harmony of the Faith and reason became the goal of Muslim philosophers from al-Kindī (d. circ.260/873) onwards. The Muslim philosophers began with the position that the Qur'ān is truth and philosophy too is truth; but truth can only be one; therefore, the Qur'ān (revelation) and philosophy (reason) must agree. This seems essentially a response to the challenge that reached the Muslim world from Greek thought. It is to be noted that this Greek philosophy was accepted by Muslims, as it had been previously accepted by Greek and Latin Christians, as providing a "natural theology". It was affected by the Neoplatonic followers. In this connection the Greek philosophers of the latter period - that is Alexandrian Syriac thought - have their bearing on Muslim thought.

The two Tahāfuts, with al-Ghazālī's al-Maqāṣid, which is a compendium of the thought of Muslim Neoplatonists - al-Fārābī and Avicenna - taken together epitomize the essential problems for Muslim thinkers arising from the impact of classical philosophy on the teachings of Muslim philosophy and theology during the fifth and sixth centuries A.H. (eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D.) as well as summarizing the views of the earlier centuries of Muslim thought. Some of these ideas may seem to be of mere historical value today but are nevertheless of vital importance from the point of view of both philosophy and theology. The Muslim belief in a personal God involves the implication of His relation with the world and its dependence upon Him. This is the main reason why al-Ghazālī discussed these problems at length and particularly gave the prime place, at the head of the ~~of the~~ twenty discussions in the Tahāfut, to the problem of the eternity of matter and the doctrine of creation. He criticized the views of the earlier Muslim thinkers (expounded in al-Maqāṣid al-falāsifa) in his Tahāfut al-falāsifa because of their over-stressed rationalistic approach and adopted a theological approach to reality.

Averroes, on the other hand, criticized al-Ghazālī in his Tahāfut at-tahāfut. His intellectual effort was

essentially a reaction against the theological pragmatism of al-Ghazālī; a return to what one might call Aristotelian positivism, as much as this could be reconciled with Muslim theology.

The main reason which made me select this problem for discussion is its major importance in Muslim theology.

CHAPTER I

The Concept of Creation in the Qur'ān

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The Concept of Creation in the Qur'ān

Introduction

The Qur'ān includes views on the subject of creation, but this is not confined to the philosophical or metaphysical interpretation of the fundamental character of creation. Falāsifa and theologians derived their inspiration from the Qur'ān and interpreted the verses in a manner favourable to their doctrine. But what is, from the objective point of view, the Qur'ānic view on the subject? The whole Qur'ān is impregnated with the thought of creation and a feeling of profound admiration for it, and though there is not much in the Qur'ān which specifically deals with the whole process of original creation, yet it abounds in allusions to God's creative activity as the manifestation of His omnipotence and omniscience. There are two types of references to creation in the Qur'ān:

Firstly, the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them;

Secondly, the creation of man.

In order to try to interpret the treatment of the concept of creation by the Qur'ān, it is proper to discuss the etymology of the terms used for creation in the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān uses a number of verbs for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of man, such as : bada^C; khalaqa; bara'a; sawwara; ja^Cala; faṭara. At first sight these terms may appear to be synonymous but on consideration one finds that they are not so, and in fact they signify different aspects of creation.

The Meanings of the various Terms used for creation

1. Badi^C or Bada^C

The Qur'an mentions: badi^C as-samāwāt wa-l ard.¹

The term badi^C occurs twice in the Qur'ān and only in connection with the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Now what is the meanings of badi^C, or of its verbal form, bada^C ?

Bada^C, means to innovate, make, produce, invent; or to bring something into existence which has not existed before, and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing.² It may mean to make something for the first time which had no previous existence, or the production of a thing unknown before.

Bada^C may mean to begin or originate a thing for the first time, not after the example of anything preceeding. It may also mean creating that which has no example or similitude.³

It signifies novelty, strangeness or the wonder of something

¹Qur. 2:117; 6:101.

²Lisan... art. Badi^C, ix, pp. 351-53.

³Lane's Lexi... I, i, pp. 166-67.

unknown before. According to these meanings, bada^C goes back to the very primal beginning as far as one can conceive it. ~~Bada¹, with hamza, as: wa huwa lladhi yabda'u al khalqa thumma yu^Ciduhu¹, that is, "it is He who begins the process of creation, then repeats it", implies the beginning of creation.~~ Thus, according to the commentators, like at-Tabari and az-Zamakhshari, badi^C as-samawat wa-l ard means he who invented the heavens and the earth with no pre-existing model.² Al-Badi^C as the attribute of God, means the originator of the creation. It means ~~the~~ the Creator and the Inventor who creates and invents without a model. Al-Badi^C is the one who brings what has no precedent in terms of an act similar to it, but there is no reference to creation out of nothingness. ~~This is made clearer in the Qur'an: alladhi ahsana kulla shay' khalaqahu wa bada khalqa-l-insan min tin³, where the beginning of the creation of pristine man from clay is mentioned.~~ So, badi^C means one who originates the things; brings them into existence; makes them or produces them for the first time, but not out of nothingness.

According to the philosophers' interpretation, like that of Averroes, the word bada^C must be understood in the

¹Qur. 30:27; & also 30:11.

²Az-Zamakhshari, Al-kashshaf 'an Haqa'iq at-Tanzil. i, 181; ii, 53; (Beirut, 1947); At-Tabari, Jami' al-bayan 'an Ta'wil al-Qur'an. (Cairo, 1374). ii, 540-41.

³Qur. 32:7.

sense 'to create out of something', as they refer it to the Qur'ān where it is stated: wa ja^calnā min al-mā' kulla shay' hayy¹; or thumma- stawa ilā-s-samā' wa hiy dukhān¹. In this way they argue that matter is pre-existing and eternal.

The commentators might point out that where it is said: badī^c as samāwāt wa-l ard, the Qur'ān also mentions: khalāqa kulla shay' and khāliq kulli shay'². Thus, if one postulates such a primal matter, it owes its origin itself to God, who is the original basis of all existence. 'God creates all things' signifies that He does not merely fashion but also creates everything. There is no doubt that by stating God as khāliq kulli shay', the Qur'ān has enlarged the scope of the attributes of the Creator, so as to include the creation of everything. But this verse does not give us any information about the initial creation of the heavens and the earth. The lexicographical and exegetical works belong to a comparatively late period, and reflect the views of a more sophisticated age. As a result the Muslim scholars arrived at a different conclusion of the Qur'ānic idea of creation. Most of them think that the Qur'ān teaches the idea of creation out of nothingness. The commentators insist on giving badī^c the meaning of 'innovator' or bada^c 'to innovate out of nothingness'. But close observation of the verses in which the Qur'ān used this word shows that these commentators are exceedingly

¹Manāhij...p.205; Fasl...p.42; cf. Qur. 21:30 & 41:11.

²Qur. 6:101-2.

far from the proper meaning of the usage of the word, as in badi^c as-samāwāt wa-l ard, the word badi^c is to be understood in the sense of the one who creates out of something, because in another place in the Qur'ān it is clearly stated that the 'heavens were created out of smoke'.¹

In fact, the Qur'ān does not indulge in any philosophical discussion of the concept of creation. There is no indication of the notion of creation ex-nihilo in the Qur'ān.

2. Khalaqa

Another word of note in connection with the process of creation is khalaqa. It is the term applied in the Qur'ān to God's creativity and it occurs frequently in the context of the creation of man, the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of everything. The word appears in the very first revealed sura al-^calaq as: khalaqa l-insan min ^calaq,² where it is used for the creation of man out of a 'blood-clot'. Here creation is out of something already existing, but as a gradual process of development. Later, the word khalaqa is used in connection with the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days: inna rabbakumu-l-lāhu alladhī khalaqa -s-samāwāt wa-l arda fī sittati ayyām.³ In sura Hūd,

¹cf. Qur. 41:11; and see also for this the commentary of Abū al-Faḍl al khatīb, on the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī, Egypt, 1330. i, p. 184.

²Qur. 96:2.

³Ibid. 7:54.

there appears for the first time the idea of the throne upon water: wa huwa alladhī khalaqa-s-samāwāt wa-l arda fī sittati ayyām wa kāna ¹carshuhu ¹ala-l-mā', that to say that all life evolved out of the waters and this statement occurs in a different way in the Qur'ān in sura al-anbiyā' as: awa lam yara lladhīna kafarū inna-s-samāwāt wa-l arda kānatā ratqan fafataqnahumā wa ja^calnā min-l-mā' kulla shay' hayy. ²

In sura Fussilat, there appears the doctrine that the origin of heaven was smoke. ³

In the above mentioned passages, the creation of the heavens and the earth, the evolution of life on our globe are mentioned first; and the making of the sky into the seven firmaments is mentioned last. It is stated that when the sky was made into the seven firmaments, it had existed previously as smoke, vapour, or steam. It does not refer to the original creation of the heavens or of other living things. No precise information is given to us on the subject.

Before establishing any definite view, it is proper to determine the meaning of the term khalaqa. Linguistically, the word khalaqa is used in the sense 'to measure and to cut out', for example when the blacksmith makes horse shoes, this operation can only take place if something is already existing. Khalaqa signifies the act of measuring, or

¹Ibid. 11:7.

²Ibid. 21:30.

³Ibid. 41:9-12.

determining the measure or proportion of a thing, or the making of a thing by measure, or according to the measure of another thing, or proportioning a thing to another thing.¹ It also signifies the bringing of a thing into existence according to a certain measure or to the requirement of wisdom.² It means that God brings into existence the creation or the created beings or mankind according to the predetermination required by wisdom.³

Thus, when one consults the Qur'ān, one finds that the word khalāqa is used as a term for creation in the sense to form something out of something, as ~~xx~~ the khalq of man from clay or of blood-clot;⁴ or to create in a general sense, as the khalq of the heavens and the earth.⁵ It is also used when the creation of things in accordance with the requirement of wisdom is involved. It also suggests creation as a gradual process of development. The Qur'ān says:

We created man of an extraction of clay,
 then We set him, a drop, in a receptacle secure,
 (the early condition of the embryo in the womb)⁶
 then We created of the drop a clot
 then We created of the clot a tissue
 then We created of the tissue bones

¹Lane's Lexi...I,i,pp.799-800.

²cf. Qur. 30:8.

³Az-Zam., al-Kash...ii, 323; cf. Qur. 10:3.

⁴Qur. 32:7; 96:2.

⁵Ibid. 25:59; 10:3; 32:4.

⁶cf. Companion to the Qur'an. 23:13

then We garmented the bones in flesh;
 thereafter We produced him as another creature.
 So blessed be God, the fairest of creators! ¹

The following passage of the Qur'ān conveys the general meaning of the term khalāqa:

He created the heavens and the earth in truth ...
 He created man of a sperm-drop...And the cattle -
 He created them for you...and He creates what you know not
 It is He who sends down to you out of heaven water
 of which you have to drink,
 and of which trees, for you to pasture your herds,
 and thereby He brings forth
 for you crops, and olives, and palms, and vines,
 and all manner of fruit...
 And He subjected to you the night and day, and
 the sun and moon; and the stars are subjected
 by His command...
 Is He who creates (yakhluqu) as
 he who does not create? ²

Khalāqa in these verses indicates the gradual process of development. This is the original meaning of the term. But later on it has been given various meanings and the meaning varies with the philosophy of the outlook of the commentator. The method and terminology of philosophy had become part of the language of the thinker and for this

¹Qur. 23:12-14; cf. also 22:5; 32:7-9; 35:11; & 40:67.

²Ibid. 16:3-17.

reason, his ideas and solutions to religious problems - such as the eternity of matter - came in fact to be fundamentally philosophical in his method.

According to the protagonist of the view of creatio ex-nihilo, the verb khalāqa means 'to initiate what had no previous existence'. In other words, when one says that God created the world, one means that He brought it from non-existence into existence. This view is the most widely accepted one among the commentators. Whereas in the earliest commentaries, such as the commentary of ibn ¹Abbās (d.68 A.H.) the terminology is very simple and cannot be compared with that of the later commentaries. In fact the earlier commentaries do not speak of any philosophical

¹Cf. Ibn ¹Abbās: Tafsīr. Al-Hashimī Press, 1280. There is also an Urdu trans., Tafsīr-¹Abbāsī. Tr. ¹Abdul Qādir, Delhi, undated. But Muhammad Husain al-Dhahabī points out that this Tafsīr is not authentic. Cf. his at-Tafsīr wa-l-Muffassirūn. Cairo, 1964. i, p. 82; cf. also as-Suyūṭī: al-Itqān. Cairo, 1278. ii, 222ff; & cf. also for the value of ibn ¹Abbās as a commentator and his Tafsīr see Goldziher, I.: die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung. Leiden, 1920. pp. 65-77. There is another Tafsīr of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150 A.H.) in the British Museum, No. Or. 6333. But it deals with the interpretation of verses concerning legal problems only.

implications of the terms. These tafrīrs lack much of the theoretical information from the natural sciences, philosophy and theology. Most of the commentators, however, are of a comparatively late date, and show later influences. Their terminology becomes more and more complicated as time goes on, until a commentary such as that of ar-Rāzī is saturated with natural science and philosophy, in addition to legal and religious matters. Many of the present day commentaries ^{are} practically digests of the modern sciences. These considerations make the study of the commentaries a matter of wider significance than the interpretation of the Qur'ān alone. These interpretations are in fact a reflection of the development of doctrine and its impregnation with elements of external origin. The task of the commentator was to develop and reinterpret the sense of the Qur'ān. ¹ Thus, the commentators, as well as the theologians and philosophers, are as far removed as they could be from the literal interpretation when dealing with the fundamental questions of theology, such as the creation of the world and the existence of God. Their interpretations are only an expression of views which they derived from many sources included the Qur'ān. This problem involves the whole of Islamic thought, and is known as the problem of reconciliation

¹See Goldziher: Vorlesungen über den Islam. Heidelberg, 1925. Ch.II, 57ff.

of revelation and reason.¹ It is generally accepted that the harmonization of the Qur'ān and external thought was one of the outstanding features of Islamic thought.

On the question of creation, the Qur'ān does not speak of how created or how uncreated the world was in the philosophical sense. It merely states that God created the world, and the sense of the word khalāqa in this context is undefined. It was long after the first two centuries of Islam that the Muslim thinkers assign to the word khalāqa a definite meaning; this resulted from the internal development which had to meet the challenge of foreign thought. The Qur'ān was used to justify the new ideas by an interpretative reading of the text, even to the point of metaphorical interpretation.

What conclusion can be reached if one disregards later interpretations and considers only the Qur'ān itself? There are verses which support the idea of creation from something pre-existing. They are:

And it is He who created
the heavens and the earth in six days,
and His Throne was upon the waters - ²

¹See for this M.Y. Mūsā: Islam, part I, Bayn ad-Din wa-l falsafa, Ch.3; cf. Ave. Fasl; and also Arberry, Rea. & Rev. pp.7,16ff. The two Tahāfuts have a special significance here.

²Qur. 11:7-9; 21:30; 41:9-12.

These verses indicate creation out of general matter, and recall the primordial matter of ancient cosmology. These verses also teach that God created heavens and the earth out of water. He created the heavens from smoke. The heavens and earth were a solid mass (rataq); then God divided (fataqa) this solid mass into the heavens and the earth. How did God create this primordial matter, or the water, no information is given to us. Those who hold the view that the creation was out of nothingness insist that God created the water too and that He created out of nothing. The majority of the theologians, philologists and commentators agree that linguistically the word khalaga is used in the sense 'to measure and cut out', and this operation can only take place with something already existing. Nevertheless, some of the commentators insist that in the Qūr'ān the word khalaga means 'to bring something out of non-existence'.¹ They made this distinction because they accepted the idea of creation ex-nihilo. Subsequently, it became necessary for them to transfer the word from its linguistic sense to another meaning, which supports the idea of creation out of nothingness. The adherent of this view quote the

¹See al-Kash...i,213; ii,3 & 328.

verses: khalaqa kulla shay'¹; and wa qad khalaqtuka min qablu wa-lam taku shay'a, in support of their argument. But the text 'He created all things', does not help us in understanding the definite meaning of the word khalaqa; and therefore, those who believe in the eternity of matter interpret it in the sense 'to form' or 'to order'. The text of the second verse, also does not give khalaqa the meaning 'to bring all things into existence out of nothingness'. The verse 'I created thee aforetime, when thou wast nothing', occurs twice in the Qur'²ān. The meaning of the first verse is: 'I created thee (Zakariyā) aforetime, when thou wast nothing'. The second verse gives the same meaning, but this time man is addressed.

It is, therefore, logical to conclude that the meaning of creation out of nothingness when given to the word khalaqa by commentators and philologists, is alien to the linguistic and the Qur'²ānic interpretation. For that reason it must be an outcome of the internal and external development of Islamic thought.

¹Qur. 6:101; & 19:9.

²Ibid. 19:9 & 19:67.

Creation by saying "Kun"

The Qur'ān says that God brings the creation into existence by His command 'Be'. It says: wa idha qada¹
amran fa innamā yaqūl lahu kun fayakūn; or innamā qawlunā²
li-shay' idha aradnāhu an naqul lahu fayakūn. Here God's
'word' or fiat is itself the deed. There is no inter-
position of time or condition between His will and its
consequences, for He is the Ultimate Reality. He is
independent of the proximate or material causes, for He
Himself creates them and establishes their laws as He pleases.
His creation is not dependent on instruments or means, or
any condition whatsoever. Existence waits on His will,
or plan or intention. The moment He wills a thing, it
becomes His word or command, and the thing forthwith comes
into existence. His will or command is sufficient to
bring all into existence and to determine everything.

But from this arise two difficulties:-

Firstly, was the command addressed to something
absolutely non-existent? If so the command was absurd.
Or was it addressed to something which had already existed?
If so, God's act was not creation.

¹Ibid. 2:117; 36:82; 40:68.

²Ibid. 16:40.

Secondly, if one says that something was non-existent and then came into being, does this not indicate that God's knowledge must have changed when the object came into being?

To these objections, the answer is that while in the life of created things there is 'proportion' and 'measure', and a lag of time or distance; in God's command, the word, the execution, and the consequences are but a single act. For example, by way of contrast one can take an illustration like that of a man writing a book. He must form the design in his mind; he must prepare himself by research, collection of knowledge, or of personal experience; he must use or acquire the art of writing; he must collect the material for writing, namely, paper, ink, pen etc., and this will connect with a chain of manufacturing processes in which he is dependent upon other people's work and experience. Then his work may have to be printed, and depends upon other people's skill; and the lag of time, space and circumstances will occur at numerous stages. In God's command, the word kun includes everything, without the intervention of or dependence upon any other being or thing whatever. Further, God knows the thing which will come into being before it came into existence. Thus, the non-existence is as much an object of God's knowledge as that which exists. And the coming into being of an object does not change God's knowledge. Again, the Qur'ān

states: wa ma amrunā illā wāhidatun kalamhin bil-basar.¹

The amr or command, direction or design is a single thing unrelated to time, "like the twinkling of an eye".

Creatures are subject to time, but the Creator is not.

He has power to do all that He wills.² He, being perfect, determines only that which is perfect in its proper order.

3. Bara'a

Another word used for creation is bara'a. It means creation free from defect.³ The primary meaning of bara'a in Arabic is to denote a thing becoming clear or free from another thing, either by being released or by production. Bara'a is creation implying liberation from pre-existing matter or circumstances, for example man's body from clay.⁴ The Qur'ān says: min qabli an nabra'a-hā.⁵

Jeffery says that the Hebrew equivalent to this verb is bara'a, signifying "he created out of pre-existing matter" or "he fashioned". In the sense of create, he further says that it is borrowed from the older religions.⁶

¹Qur. 54:50.

²Ibid. 2:109; et passim.

³Lane's Lexi... I, i, p. 178.

⁴Baydāwī, Anwār-ut-Tanzīl. ii, 51.

⁵Qur. 57:22

⁶The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān. p. 76.

In this connection, it can be pointed out that the Qur'ān has been revealed in the plain Arabic language of the time. "We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān; haply you will understand".¹ If the Qur'ān uses this word bara'a in the sense to make or to create, which in Hebrew means to shape or create, one can say that the Qur'ān makes use of words prevalent in Arabic as it is stated: "We have made it easy by thy tongue".² Thus, if the Qur'ān retains the word bara'a, used in the older religions, it appears as if it was necessary to make it intelligible to the people among whom it was promulgated.

So, bara'a means to create out of pre-existing matter, or to fashion and bāri' means one who forms or fashions; and hence the distinction from khāliq. The latter means one who brings something into existence according to a proper plan and measure; whereas the former signifies one who fashions a thing into its proper shape. Generally speaking, however, bāri' is used somewhat synonymously with khāliq. But technically, the word khalāqa is a term applied to creation in accordance with some predetermined plan, and the author of all creation is Al-khāliq.

¹Qur. 43:3; and also 12:2 & 42:7.

²Ibid. 44:58.

Bara'a implies a process of evolving from previously created matter or state, and the author of this process is Al-Bāri'. Al-Bāri' applied to God means one who creates all things free from any incongruity, or fault, and distinguishes one from another by various forms.¹

4. Sawwara

Again, the word sawwara implies giving definite shape, form, figure or colour, so as to make a thing exactly suited to a given end or object. Sawwar means he formed, fashioned, figured, shaped, sculptured, or pictured him or it.² Al-Musawwir as an epithet of God means the Maker, or Fashioner of all existing things, who has established them in their variety and multitude, and given to every one of them a special form and a particular manner of being, whereby it is distinguished.

According to al-Ijī and al-Jurjānī, "Al-khāliq and Al-Bāri' have a single sense: the Producer, Creator of things; Al-Musawwir, the Organizer, who ordains and composes the forms (ṣuwar) of things. These last Names depend on attributes of act".³ But az-Zamakhsharī says that these words have distinct meanings. According to him, "Al-khāliq means one who creates according to measure; Al-Bāri'

¹Cf. Qur. 59:24; al-Kash... i, pp. 140-41; iv, p. 509.

²Lane's Lexi... I, iv, p. 1744.

³EI.² art. 'Al-Asmā' al-Husnā', Gardet, l., p. 715.

implies one who distinguishes one figure from another; and Al-Musawwir¹ is the one who fashions things in different forms". All three connote the passage from non-existence to existence; the first towards determination, in accordance with the divine decree (qadar); the second towards existence properly so-called wujūd; the third towards the co-ordination of ideal forms. All these refer to the completion of the visible stage of creation.

5. Ja^cala

The word ja^cala implies making new shapes and forms, or new dispositions.² It means he made a thing of or from a thing, as in the Qur'ān: wa ja^cala -z-zulumāt wa-n-nūr; wa-l lāhu ja^cala lakum min anfusikum azwājān.³ Or further, He made a thing to be in a particular state or condition, as in the Qur'ān: alladhī ja^cala lakum-l ard firashā; or wa ja^cala lakum as-sam^c wā-l absāra wā-l af'ida.⁴ Ja^cala, thus, signifies the making of a thing to become in a particular state or condition, or constituting or appointing it for a definite purpose. The Qur'ān says:

Blessed be He

¹Al-kash...iv, pp. 509-10.

²Lane's Lexi...I, ii, pp. 430-31.

³Qur. 6:1; & 16:72.

⁴Ibid. 2:22; & 16:78.

Blessed be He

who has set in heaven constellations, and has set
among them a lamp and
an illuminating moon.
And it is He who made the night and day a succession.¹

6. Fatara

Again, fatara signifies some other aspect of creation. It means to produce or to bring into existence, or to begin. Fatara implies the creation of primal matter to which further processes are to be applied, as when one prepares dough but leaves it until it should become mature to be fashioned later.² Ibn 'Abbās says that he did not know what is the meaning of fātir -as-samāwāt wa-l ard, until two Arabs of the desert came to him, disputing together respecting a well, and one of them said: 'ana fātartu, meaning I originated, or began it.³ Fātir means the one who extracts something by breaking the shell. The attribute Al-Fātir, therefore, indicates that God has created matter with the inherent faculties of development and due season He breaks open the shell or the covering which confines these faculties and brings

¹Qur. 25:61-62; cf. also 78:6,9-13.

²Lane's Lexi...I,iv,pp.2415-16.

³Lisān, art. ' Fātir ',vi,pp.361-65.

them into operation. For instance, a seed possesses the faculty of growing into a plant or a tree but this faculty comes into operation only at a certain season and under certain conditions. When those conditions arise and the season arrives, the seed begins to develop its faculty of growth. This attribute, thus, indicates that the universe continues developing in accordance with its set inherent laws that God has laid down. All the time the universe goes on traversing preparatory stages and its inherent faculties come into play at certain seasons and new forms of life become perceptible.

7. Ansha'a

Another word used in connection with the creation is ansha'a, as in the Qur'ān: wa huwa-l-ladhī ansha'akum¹ min nafsīn wāhida. It means to make individuals to grow, increase, develop, or reach maturity. It is one of the wonders of God's creation that from one person we have grown to be so many, and each individual has so many faculties and capacities, and yet we are produced from a single person.

¹Qur. 6:98.

From the above discussion it is clear that God is the Ultimate cause of all creation. Everything in the universe owes its existence to God. Everything goes by law, porportion and measure, and all things are created by gradual processes. Everything depends upon His will and command. God's knowledge is absolute and is not conditioned by time and space. His activity still goes on. He creates what He wishes, increasing creation as He wills. He is powerful over everything. He is the absolute Creator, who is unlike all creation. The Qur'ān further affirms that there is no god but He, the Creator of all things, the self-subsisting and all-sustaining. He to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.

But the Qur'ān did not deal with the problem of creation, going into the metaphysical implications of it. It introduces ideas which are simple and does not give any philosophical explanation. It, in fact, follows the experiences~~es~~ with which one is familiar. There is no explanation in the Qur'ān or at least there is no clear statement which affirms the idea of creation ex-nihilo, though one might interpret it so as the commentators did. What is clear from the Qur'ān is that God is the Agent of the creation, knowing all its details, and that He regulates it. This conception is contrary to the view that God

does not know anything apart from Himself, except as a final cause, and that He takes no care for things lower than Him, for it derogates His perfection, if He were to think about anything except that which is perfect, that is Himself.

~~But~~ God is not the mover but the Creator of all that exists.

The Qur'ān says: wa laqad khalaqnākum thumma sawwarnākum.¹

Moreover, He guides and controls all affairs. Everything depends upon His will. When He intends a thing, He says to it 'Be' and it comes into existence. Thus, the Qur'ānic view is that God is not only the Creator, but also the Agent whose acts manifest His providence for all that He has created.

Conclusion

The concept of creation as defined in the Qur'ān involves essentially two elements: one, an act of God, which is complete in all respects; and secondly, a relation of total dependence of the created things upon their Creator. The concept of creation in the Qur'ān, is above all a token of divine power.

¹Qur. 7:11.

CHAPTER II

The Cosmological Views of the Muslim Neoplatonists as expressed in al-Maqāsid

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as expressed in al-MaqāsidIntroduction

Little is known about the ideas of the creation as held by Muslims in the first century of Islam, or indeed in the first half of the second century. The Qur'ānic conception, as shown in the preceding chapter, is general. No doubt the Qur'ān invites consideration of the nature of the world, the creation of the heavens and the earth in six periods, as proof for the existence of God; but not as a philosophical enquiry for the concept of creation. It seems that the idea of creation ex-nihilo, with its meta-physical implications must be late. It is only after the middle of the second century that the Islamic thought advanced some solutions to the problem of the creation. But from the beginning of the third century, there began to be two distinct trends of thought:-

(a) One philosophical, influenced above all by the ancient Greek thought, represented by al-Kindī (d.260/873);¹

(b) and the other theological, with its own approach to the problem despite its frequent use of the same terminology, represented by Abu-'l Hudhayl and an-Nazzām

¹Walzer, R., Greek into Arabic. Ch.I.

(d. 830, 841 or later). Both of them reach the conclusion that the world was created ex-nihilo, and had a beginning in time before which there was no world. In this period one finds no other trend, such as the idea of the eternity of the world. Yet what one knows of this period is that the Muslims were already aware of the ideas concerning the doctrine of creation current in other religions -¹ Manichaeism and Zoroastrian doctrines of the creation; the ideas of the various groups of Dahriyya, who believed in the eternity of the world, in the sense of the eternity of its matter or form, or in the eternity of the primeval matter; or a number of various Christian and Greek ideas. Such influences must have made themselves felt both through personal contacts and through the works of translation, which include many of the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Plotinus.² Neoplatonism was the system just coming to the fore-front when the Christians of Alexandria came in contact with philosophy and it is from them that it was introduced to the Islamic world. The Greek philosophy was accepted by the Muslims, as it had been previously accepted by the Greek and Latin Christians, as providing a "natural theology". The Muslim scholars - al-Fārābī and

¹Iqbal, M., The Development of Metaphysics in Persia. Ch.I.

²Islamic Philosophy and Theology. p.45.

Avicenna - had to adjust themselves to these ideas in one way or the other. And the most important work in the fuller development of their outlook was the so-called Theology of Aristotle, which appeared in the Islamic world about 226 A.H., and was regarded at that period as a genuine work of Aristotle.

The form in which the metaphysical tradition reached the Islamic world, at the time of al-Fārābī (d.950) and Avicenna (d.1037), is mainly Neoplatonic. Al-Fārābī and Avicenna adopted in general the Neoplatonic line of thought concerning their cosmological doctrines. According to them, God is one, the 'necessarily existent' (wājib al-wujūd), from whom emanated the first intelligence, which is the matrix of all multiplicity. They probably felt that there was no fundamental opposition between the Greek philosophical learning and Islamic thought. In their philosophy they seem to have thought of themselves as supporting and elucidating what they considered to be the central doctrine of Islam, removing all philosophical conflict, and therefore tried to reconcile philosophy and religion in their own way. Metaphysics presented a formidable challenge to Muslim theology especially in such questions as:

How many could arise from the One; or how the temporal proceeds from the Eternal; and how the temporal is related to the Eternal?

Islamic philosophy and theology owes much of its richness and complexity to such questions and the dispute about the creation. Before giving an exposition of the Muslim philosophers' views, as in al-Maqāsid, it is proper to have a glance at the Neoplatonists' views of emanation.

The Neoplatonists Views

The Neoplatonists expressed the doctrine of one God - eternal, unchanging, and far removed above the phenomenal world - as the first cause of all that exists (a philosophical monotheism, which is to be fitted with the Islamic concept). The doctrine of an Absolute Reality, as the necessary cause of all that is variable, was one to which all philosophy and especially the Neoplatonic school, was tending. As causation to some extent implies change, this First Cause could not be regarded as directly creating the world, but only as the eternal source of eternally proceeding emanation by means of which the power of the First Cause is projected so as to produce the world and all its contents. The essential features of this teaching are: the absolute unity of the First Cause, its absolute reality, its eternity and its invariability, (all of which necessarily remove it above the plane of things knowable to man) and the operative emanation ceaselessly issuing forth, eternal like its source, yet acting in time and space.

In the teaching of Plotinus, God is the absolute, the First Potency, beyond the sphere of existence. As absolute God implies a compelling necessity so that all which proceeds from Him is not enforced but is necessarily so in the sense that nothing else is possible. Yet Plotinus would never allow one to say that God "wills" anything, for will implies a desire for what is not possessed or not yet present; will operates in time and space, but necessity ever proceeds from the eternal One who does not act in time. Nor can one conceive of God as knowing, conscious or thinking, all terms which describe the mental activities in the world of variable phenomena. He is all knowing by immediate apprehension which in no way resembles the operation of thought, but is super-conscious, a condition which Plotinus describes as "wakefulness", a perpetual being¹ aware without the need of obtaining information.

From the true God, the eternal absolute, proceeds the Nous - a term which has been variously rendered as² Reason; Intellect; Intelligence; or Spirit. An eternal emanation is necessitated in order that the First Cause may remain unchanged, which would not be the case if it had once

¹The Enneads. 5.3.12.

²Cf. Inge, The Philosophy of Plotinus. ii, p.38.

not been a source and then had become the source of emanation; there can be no "becoming" in the First Cause. The emanation is of the same nature as its cause, but is projected into the world of phenomena. From the Nous proceeds the Psyche, the principle of life and motion, the world soul which is the universe and which is shared by every living creature.

Reality, for Plotinus, is an ordered hierarchical whole, comprising two movements:

(i) One of the descent; and (ii) the other of the ascent.

(i) The first is an automatic emanation by which the higher generates the lower.

(ii) While the second is a movement of return, by which the soul attains reabsorption in the divine source.

The first movement is from unity to multiplicity; the second is a reverse movement, that is to say, from multiplicity to unity. At the head of this system stands a transcendent First Principle, the One, which is ineffable and incomprehensible to the discursive as well as to the intuitive reason. Below the One, lie the two hypostases which are the universal correlatives of the whole range of human life, physical and intellectual. These are Nous: Aristotle's active intellect and world soul, whose function

is to contemplate as well as to direct the material world. The hypostases are united with each other and the One, firstly by emanation, which is the radiation of the lower from the higher; and by return the contemplation of the higher by the lower.

The One cannot be said to have a being, for this way of thinking introduces a duality between subject and object and there can be no duality in Pure unity. In the absolute, in its first and highest hypostasis, the One is neither existence nor thought; neither moved nor movable; it is simple unity. This is in brief the ontology and cosmology which the Muslim thinkers- al-Fārābī and Avicenna - tried to mould in their own way to solve the problem of One and many and the nature of the relation of the world to its source.

Preliminary Discussion on al-Maqāṣid

When al-Maqāṣid was introduced in literary circles, through its Latin translation, the whole of the Western world took it that here was al-Ghazālī speaking for himself and drew up lists of his philosophical errors. The style of the book was such a faithful exposition of the Aristotelianism that it was taken to be the work of a genuine Aristotelian. But this misunderstanding arose simply

because the translator through sheer chance omitted al-Ghazali's preface and colophon.¹ It is possible that he might have worked from incomplete manuscript; whereas the title of the book Maqāsid al-falāsifa in itself is self-explanatory. Maqṣad is, what is intended or meant. Al-Maqāsid is most emphatically not al-Ghazālī's philosophy, but is an objective statement by him of what the Muslim Neoplatonists - al-Fārābī and Avicenna - meant in their books. It is one of the best summaries of the Muslim philosophers' views. Al-Ghazālī clearly realized that to refute a system before getting thoroughly immersed in its very depth was to act blindly. He says:

A man cannot grasp what is defective in any of the sciences unless he has so complete a grasp of the science in question that he equals its most learned exponents in the appreciation of its fundamental principles, and goes beyond and surpasses them, probing into some of tangles and profundities which the very professors of the science have neglected.²

In all intellectual honesty al-Ghazālī refrained from saying anything against the philosophers till he had completely mastered their system. Following a regular

¹Cf. Introduction to the History of Science. II,i,p.171.

²The Faith & Practice.p.29.

convention in the writing of didactic treatises, al-Ghazālī begins with an address to a supposed disciple who has asked for instruction. He says:

You have desired from me a doubt-removing discourse, uncovering the inconsistencies of the philosophers and the mutual contradictions in their views and how they hide their suppressions and their deceits. But to help you thus is not at all desirable except after teaching you first their position (madhhab) and making you know their dogmatic structure. For it is absurd to consider the falsity of positions before understanding their sources; it is indeed shooting an arrow blindly and at a venture. So I am of the opinion that I should prefix to an exposition of how this structure falls to pieces, a concise discourse containing a reproduction (hikāya) of their meaning (maqāsid) as to the sciences which they cultivate: logical; physical; and theological; without distinguishing between the sound and the false in them (ḥaqq wa-l bāṭil); that is, I intend only to make intelligible the ultimate purpose (ghāya) of their doctrine without making any addition to what they mean. I shall state it by way of accurate relation of facts and reproduction, joined with what they held to be proofs. The object of this book is to reproduce the meanings of the philosophers (Maqāsid al-falāsifa) and that is its title.¹

¹Maqāsid al-falāsifa. (ed. Cairo, 1912) pp. 2-3.

Al-Ghazālī further states:

We should understand that what we are now stating by way of reproduction unconsidered, unrestricted without investigation as to the sound and the false. When we finish with that we will begin again seriously and with a purpose in a separate book which we shall call, if it be the will of Allāh, the Tahāfut al-falāsifa.¹

The reiteration here shows how deeply al-Ghazālī feared that his purpose would be misunderstood, or misrepresented, or that the opinions in the book would be ascribed to him. In al-Munqidh he repeats the similar statement:

I might be suspected of neglecting the essential basis of their proof, or of having heard it and failed to understand it, I repeated it in my book.²

The Cosmological Views of the Philosophers as in al-Maqāsid

The main problem facing the Muslim philosophers was how to reconcile the absolute unity and perfection of God with the creation of a multiple universe full of imperfections; the problem of the One and many; and the relation of the mutable to the immutable. If God's will was responsible for the creation of the world, then one is confronted with

¹Ibid. pp.3-4.

²The Faith and Practice, p.45.

the problem of the duality of God and His will. How could the postulate of the unity of God be preserved in view of the fact that there is multiplicity in the world? By introducing the theory of emanation (fayd), the Muslim philosophers relieved God of all the responsibility of the existence of multiplicity.

To understand the cosmological doctrine of the Muslim Neoplatonists, it is necessary to discuss their ontology and its implications.

The Problem of Existence and its nature

According to the Muslim philosophers the ultimate and universal concept is that of existence. Al-Ghazālī states that they believe:

Existence may be divided into substance (jawhar) and accident (ʿarāḍ); and the nature of this division is of the form, as a thing is divided into differentia and species. In principle, first of all it is required that 'existence' should be defined and then its implications be explained. But the concept of existence is so self-evident and a priori that it cannot be defined or described. This division is based on the fact that one can understand existence by means of one's intelligence alone without requiring any definition or description, for it has neither differentia nor property.

¹Maqa...pp.79-80; cf. Naj.p.200.

In other words the philosophers assert that 'existence' cannot be explained because it is a fundamental principle (mabda') for every explanation. It has no explanation, rather its form subsists in the mind without the mediation of anything else. All existing beings can be seen in a manner of division into substance and accident. Nothing is more evident and manifest for its proper characterization than the existence of a thing. Again, if it is said:

Existence is that which is characterized by the qualities of origination and eternity; this would be a false definition, for the originated thing consists of existence after non-existence and the eternal thing consists of existence not preceded by non-existence; but existence is that which had no beginning.¹

When it is known that the definition of existence is not possible and it is also known that it is divisible into substance and accident the question is: what is substance and accident? Existences of things may be listed under two categories: (a) One which depends upon a locus for its subsistence and is called accident; and (b) the other which is not so dependent and is called substance.

¹Maqa...p.80; cf. Na.j...p.218.

The first category is divisible into two groups: (i) The first occurs in a locus which subsists in itself. (ii) The second occurs in a place in such a way that the essence of the place is constituted by it and that essence is subject to change owing to this occurrence.¹ So an accident is that which occurs in a subject. It is incapable of subsisting in itself and as such depends upon a subject for its subsistence. Subject in reality subsists by itself. Whenever a place cannot be independent of subsistence, it is not called a subject, rather it is called matter (hayūlā). On the other hand, a thing may exist in a place and be a substance along with it. If the proximate place where it exists becomes subsistence with the substance, it does not subsist with its essence; thereupon it has a cause of subsistence which is called form. So, according to the philosophers, form is the quality or quiddity by which a body is what it is, whereas matter is that which supports the quality or form. Matter can only exist by the form imparted to it by the Intellect; without form it would be pure receptivity deprived of being. That is why prime matter cannot be found by itself. As regards man - that which pursues the course of humanity is called form and its place is termed matter. Wood, for instance, is a subject for the form of chair and matter for the form of ashes.

¹Maqa...pp.80-81.

For it remains wood when it assumes the form of chair, but loses its being with the form of ashes. Al-Ghazālī further states that form is called substance, because substance consists of every existent which is not in a subject, while form is not in a subject.¹

Classification of Substances

Thus substances are divided into four groups:

- (a) Matter (hayūlā);
- (b) Form (sūra);
- (c) Body (jism);
- (d) Separated Intelligence (ʿaql-mufarraq).²

Separated intelligence exists by itself and in every body the first three of the above substances exist, as for example, water is a body composed of the form of a liquid thing, and matter is a support to it.³

Thus, the philosophers believe that existents can be divided into what exists in a substratum, like accidents and forms, and what does not exist in a substratum. The latter can be divided again into what serves as a substratum for other things, for example bodies, and what does not exist in a substratum, for example substances which subsist by themselves. These latter again are divided into those which exert influence not on bodies but on souls, and ^{those} which _^

¹This argument is logically false, but al-Ghazali simply states the philosophers' views in a methodical way without pointing any inconsistency whatsoever.

²Maqa...p.82; cf. Naj...p.208.

³Maqa...p.82.

are called abstract intelligences. Existents which inhere in a substratum, like accidents, are temporal and have temporal causes which terminate in a principle, in one way temporal, in another way everlasting, namely, circular movement. So those principles which exist by themselves and do not inhere in a substratum, are of three kinds:

1. Bodies, which are the lowest type;
2. Separated or abstract intelligences, which are not attached to bodies, either by way of action or by being impressed upon them, which are the highest type; and
3. Souls, which are the intermediate agencies, attached to the bodies in a certain way, namely, through their influence and their action upon them, and which stand midway in dignity; they undergo an influence from the intelligences and exert an influence upon the bodies.

Besides this division of existents into substances which comprise the various domains of the cosmos, the philosophers make another division of existents into possible and necessary.

Division of Existents into Possible and Necessary

Having discussed the essence and existence, the philosophers, as al-Ghazālī states in al-Maqāsid move on to

another fundamental division of existence into possible (mumkin) and necessary (wājib).¹ The possible existence is that which is dependent upon another for its existence. The necessary is the one which is not so dependent; rather it forms an absolute which requires nothing for the completion of its nature and is necessary by its essence alone. ~~The latter kind belongs to the essence of the Necessary Being in whom His existence and essence coincide with that of unity, truth, and goodness.~~ God is alone a necessary being which has no connection with anything else. He is a transcendental being in essence as well as in all other respects.² The existence of God wholly concurs with His essence. Necessary Being is an unbending unity which involves no multiplicity in its essence. The existence of God is not different from His quiddity. Generally, the concept of identity is distinct from that of quiddity and its existence is accidental to quiddity. But while considering the Essence of God,³ both identity and quiddity form the unity of His being. Every accidental thing is caused. For if it were exist^t_^ by its essence, it would

¹Ibid. pp. 131-33.

²Cf. Fārā. Tx. pp. 23-24; see also Avi., Risā. ^dArsh. tr. pp. 25-37; and also Afnan, Avicenna. p. 169.

³Maqa... p. 139.

not be accidental to something else. Wherever it is accidental to some other thing, it is dependent upon it, since it cannot be except along with it. The cause of its existence must be one of the following two things. Either it is the quiddity or something else. But if it is something else, the existence would then be accidental and caused. On the other hand, quiddity by itself is incapable of becoming a cause for its existence, because non-existence cannot be the cause of existence, and quiddity has no existence prior to this existence. How would it be a cause? If it had an existence before this existence, it would be independent of the second existence. But then the same series of questions would follow, that is, whether this existence is accidental or not. However, His quiddity and identity form the unity of His Being which does not resemble anything else. For whatever can be enumerated, is simply a contingent thing which derives its being from Necessary Being.¹ Further, Necessary Being is not related to anything as that thing is related to Him in such a way that each of them is the cause of the other. For instance, B is the cause of C and C is the cause of B. Here B in view of its being a cause is prior to C; and C in view of its being a cause, on the other hand, is prior to B.

¹Ibid.

Thus one is prior to the other which precedes it and this is an absurd statement. For in respect of its being a cause each of them occurs before its associate and in respect of its being effect it follows the other. Consequently, each of the phenomena appears to be the cause of the other and this is absurd.¹ Thus their views consist of two aspects: (a) One deals with the principle that God is not (causally) related to anything else as that thing is (causally) related to Him. (b) The other that everything in the world is contingent. It requires another for its existence and that thing is in need of something else for its coming into being. The process of one contingent thing's coming into being pursues an upward trend till it reaches Necessary Being. Thus the thing, according to the philosophers, cannot be a cause for itself. Similarly, its quiddity is incapable of being a cause of its existence. Furthermore, one quiddity cannot have two existences, one deriving something and the other having something derived. On this basis there cannot be two things, each of them being the cause of the other.

Again, God cannot be related to any other thing as that other thing is related to Him; not only in respect of causality but also in respect of reciprocity such as between two brothers. For, if the non-existence of the one does

¹Ibid.p.140; cf. Shifā'.p.37.

not follow from that of the other, no relation can be established. On the other hand, existence which is different from necessary existence can have a relation with Necessary Being.¹ But it is to be noted that this form of relation is similar to that of the effect to its cause, where effect is related to cause, but cause may not be so related. In other words, if the non-existence of one follows from the non-existence of the other, it can simply be contingent and not necessary. Moreover, whatever depends upon another thing can be merely contingent. For there are two alternatives: either that other thing would be sufficient² in its existence; or it would require another thing. However, either of these cases would be contrary to the nature of Necessary Being.

Thus, the philosophers are of the opinion that neither can anything ever be causally related to God, nor can any reciprocal relation be attributed to Him, indicating thereby that all finite categories fall short of actual characterization of the nature of God. And also there should not be two things equally necessary.

Further, al-Ghazālī states on behalf of the philosophers that there cannot be any attribute which can augment

¹Maqa...p.140.

²Ibid; cf. Naj...pp.225-26.

His essence. Because if He subsists with that attribute, He is connected with it and is composed of different parts. But it may be noted that all that is composed of things is caused. If its non-existence does not follow from the implication of the non-existence of that attribute, it may be treated as an accidental phenomenon, (as in the case of knowledge in man). However, this is inconceivable, since every accidental phenomenon is caused. But if its cause is the essence of God, then the essence would imply two aspects, one being active and the other being receptive; but His being active is different from His being receptive. As a result multiplicity would occur in the essence of God; which is absolutely inconceivable because He is One in every respect.¹ It is further stated that the nature of God cannot be subject to change. All categories of change consist of the creation of a quality which did not exist before. It becomes a new reference. However, everything which is created necessarily requires a cause and in no way can it be possible without it and be its essence. In other words, every quality follows from the essence and exists with it, but it never comes after it. This leads

¹Maqa...pp.141-42; cf. Fārā.Tx.p.22; Avi. Risā^cArsh.Tr.p.31.

one to believe that the essence of God is the absolute criterion of truth which is unconditional, invariable, and eternal principle transcending all finite relations and references. Moreover, God is not receptive, nothing can be added to His essence; for the act of doing and that of receiving imply two distinct phenomena; as such it causes¹ a duality in His essence which is impossible.

The philosophers believe that nothing can emanate unmediated from God except one thing. Then various things come out of it mediately and successively. Thus He is one without any multiplicity whatsoever. According to them, multiplicity of things may be of two kinds: (a) It consists of different parts of things, as is the multiplicity of a composite body; (b) or, it consists of the multiplicity of a concept where the thing is divided into groups which cannot be independent of one or the other; such as, form and matter, or being and quiddity. The philosophers exclude all types of multiplicity and reject it as a constituent part of His essence. * The Necessary Being is one, and nothing can proceed from it except one. Thus, they believe that the Necessary Existent is one and free from imperfections. It is the principle of things and things proceed from it in proper succession. Speaking of

¹Maqa....p.143; Fārā.Tx.p.38; Avi. Risā.^cArsh.Tr. pp.35-37.

Avicenna, Watt says:

In the centre of his metaphysics, is the First Being or absolute One, which was understood to be identical with God as proclaimed in Islamic doctrine. From him emanated all other existent things in hierarchical order.¹

This idea is equally true in the case of al-Fārābī.²

Thus, in the opinion of the philosophers, the Necessary Being is one in number, and its being should always have one essence, otherwise multiplicity would result. It is pure being different from the contingent ones. The latter requires necessarily another for its coming into being. In other words, the world and all things in it are possible beings and contingent upon the Necessary Being. The possible beings are themselves of two kinds:

(a) Those which though possible in themselves, are made necessary by the Necessary Being; and

(b) those that are simply possible without any kind of necessity attached to them.

The first class consists of the pure and simple intellectual substances; which are the eternal effects of

¹Islamic Philosophy and Theology. p.55.

²Cf. Fārābī. Tx. pp.23-24.

God in the sense that they are made necessary by Him. The second comprises the creatures of the world of generation and corruption, which already contain the principle of non-eternity within themselves, and are bound to wither and die away. God is the agent of all things in the sense that He is the existent from whom every distinct existence emanates. But there is no compound element in His essence, and He is free from all sorts of causes. With regard to His relation with other existents, all of them emanate from Him according to known order and media. "All that is other than the Necessary Being emanates from Him in successive order. In other words, the existence of all other things is derived from Him". In order to demonstrate this view it is further stated: "that the Necessary Being is one in number. What is subject to enumeration cannot be necessary; rather it must simply be a contingent thing which requires the Necessary Being for its coming into existence."¹

Thus, there are various kinds of existents which successively emanate from God. An existent may be necessary and contingent, while the latter requires the Necessary Being

¹Maqa...p.146; cf. Fārā.Tx.p.40; Shifā'.p.47.

for coming into being. God is one and pure Being; as such there is no compound element in His essence and He is free from causes and imperfection. Things other than Him derive their existence from Him in proper succession.

The Theory of Emanation

After giving an exposition of their ontological views, al-Ghazālī proceeds to state the Muslim philosophers' cosmological beliefs. In their ontology, as shown above, they emphasized the transcendence of the Necessary Being above all possible beings. To preserve that notion, they accepted the Neoplatonic principle, ex uno non fit nisi unum,¹ and on its basis they developed their theory of emanation (fayḍ). The world in this perspective is compared to the rays of the Sun, and the Necessary Being or the First Principle to the Sun itself. The rays of the Sun are not the Sun but they are nothing other than the Sun.² The Neoplatonic cosmology which the Muslim philosophers follow in a similar manner derive the hierarchy of creatures from the Pure Being itself without in any way destroying the absolute transcendence of Being with respect to the universe which it manifests.

¹The Enneads. 5.3.16.

²Cf. Fārābī, Tx. p.39.



In the opinion of the Muslim philosophers, the principles according to which the manifestation of the world takes place are as follows:

- (1) Division of existence into necessary and possible.
- (2) From unity or one only one can proceed (al-awwal sadara minhu shay' wāhid)¹.
- (3) Intellection of the Necessary Being² is the cause of existence.

They conceive that from the Necessary Being or the First Principle, which is a pure unity, it is inconceivable that anything should proceed except that which is itself a unity and that takes place through intellection. The first emanation from the existence of the First Principle is numerically one.

¹Maqa...p.218.

²Cf. Avi. Risā. dar haqīqat wa kayfiyat (Tehran, 1952). p.8; (The authenticity of the Risala dar haqīqat wa kayfiyat... has been doubted by some authorities, but the views on Being and emanation are more or less the same as found in Avicenna's other works).
cf. also Gardet, La Pensée religieuse d'Avicenna. p.48.

The Emanation of One from the First and further Procession

According to the philosophers, al-Ghazālī states,
 out of the one only one can proceed.¹ Now the First Principle is one in every respect and the world is composed out of different constituents. How does it proceed from one? If it proceeds from a compound in which there is multiplicity, where does it come from? Eventually, it is necessary to connect multiplicity with the One, which is absurd. From the existence of the First Principle there emanates the first intelligence - an existent which subsists by itself, immaterial, not impressed on body, conscious of its principle. And this becomes the source² of the coming about of multiplicity. This first intelligence is possible in essence, and necessary by virtue of the 'Causer of causes' (musabbib al-asbāb); and thus it has a two-fold existence: possible and necessary and is the spring of multiplicity for it has three kinds of knowledge - of the First Principle; of its own essence in so far as it is necessary; and of its being possible.

¹Maqa...p.218; cf. Fārā.Tx.p.38; and also Shifā'.p.406.

²Maqa...p.218.

Because the first intelligence is possible, it generates multiplicity within itself. By intellection of the First Principle, it gives rise to the Second intelligence; and by intellection of its own essence to two beings which are the soul of the first heaven and its body. One may say that the first intelligence has three forms of knowledge:

- (i) Knowledge of the Essence of the First Principle.
- (ii) Knowledge of its own essence as a being necessary by virtue of another being (wājib bi ghayrīh).¹
- (iii) Knowledge of its own essence as a possible being.

So from its existence there derive three things, an intelligence, the soul, and the body of the farthest sphere, that is the ninth heaven (falak al-aflāk).²

Then from the second intelligence there derive a third intelligence and the soul and the body of the sphere of the fixed stars (falak al-burūj); then from the third intelligence there derive a fourth intelligence and the soul and the body of the sphere of Saturn; then from the fourth intelligence there derive a fifth intelligence and the soul and the body of the sphere of Jupiter; and so

¹Maqa...p.219; cf. Shifā'.pp.405-406.

²Maqa...p.220; cf. also Saliba, La Metaphysique d'Avicenna. pp.128-32; cf. Naj.256-57.

on till one arrives at the intelligence from which there derive the intelligence; the soul and the body of the sphere of the moon; and this last intelligence is that which is called the active intelligence (al^c aql al-fa^c al)¹.

This scheme of the emanation of the ten intelligences and the nine celestial or planetary spheres corresponds in the following manner:

No. of Heaven	Name of Heaven	No. of Generating Intelligence
9	The highest heaven (<u>falak al-aflāk</u>)	1
8	Heaven of the fixed stars (<u>falak al-burūj</u>)	2
7	Saturn (<u>zuhal</u>)	3
6	Jupiter (<u>mustarī</u>)	4
5	Mars (<u>mirrikh</u>)	5
4	Sun (<u>shms</u>)	6
3	Venus (<u>zuhara</u>)	7
2	Mercury (<u>utariḍ</u>)	8
1	Moon (<u>qamar</u>)	9

Then there follows that which fills the sphere of the moon, namely, the matter which receives generation and

¹Cf. Risā. dar Haqi... p.13; awwala mā khalaqa al-lāhu -l^c aqla
see also Risā. Arsh. Tr. p.36; and cf. also Goldzier art.

'Platonic & Gnostic element in Traditions', (tr. A. Badawi, al-Turath al-Yunani. Cairo, 1940. p.221).

corruption from the active intellect and from the natures of the spheres. Then through the action of the movements of the spheres and the stars the matters are mixed in different mixtures from which the minerals, vegetables, and animals arise. It is not necessary that from each intelligence another intelligence should derive endlessly, for these intelligences are of a different kind, and what is valid for the one is not valid for the other, that is these intellects are of gradually diminishing unification and dignity. It follows from this that the intelligences after the First Principle are ten in number and that there are nine spheres, and the sum of these noble principles after the First Principle is therefore nineteen; and that under each of the primary intelligences there are three things, another intelligence and a soul and body of a sphere. Therefore there must be in each intellect a triple character, and in the first effect a plurality can only be imagined in this way:

- (1) It is conscious of its principle;
- (2) it is conscious of itself;
- (3) it is itself possible, since the necessity of its existence derives from another.

These three conditions, and the most noble of these three effects must be related to the most noble of these conditions.

¹Maqa...p.220; cf. Naj...p.275.

Therefore the intelligence proceeds from the first effect in so far as the first effect is conscious of its principle; the soul of the sphere proceeds from the first effect, in so far as the first effect is conscious of itself; and the body of the sphere proceeds from the first effect, in so far as by itself the first effect belongs to possible existence. One must still explain why this triple character is found in the first effect, although its principle is only one. The philosophers say that from the First Principle only one thing proceeds, namely, the essence of this intelligence through which it is conscious of itself. The effect, however, must by itself become conscious of its principle, and this kind of consciousness cannot derive from its cause. Also the effect by itself belongs to possible existence, and cannot receive this possibility from the First Principle, but possesses it in its own essence. They do indeed regard it as possible that one effect should proceed from the one, although this effect possesses by itself and not through its principle certain necessary qualities, either relative or non-relative. In this way multiplicity arises, and so it becomes the principle of the existence of multiplicity.

Starting from the First Principle, according to the philosophers, the emanation proceeds till the last or the tenth intelligence appears which bridges the gulf between the heavens and the earth. It produces the first matter (hayūlā) which is passive and formless but which is basis of the elements from which all creatures arise. The composition and decomposition of the elements is the cause of generation and corruption of all bodies. All these transformations take place under the influence of the movement of the spheres. As the actice intelligence is the producer of the first matter, it is also the bestower of forms (wāhib as-suwar). It gives to each matter its proper form and to each body a soul when that body is ready to receive it.¹

Existence of Lower Things

In the opinion of the philosophers, al-Ghazālī further states:

And after that there starts the existence of the lower things which are the four elements (anāsir). There is no doubt that there are differences in them because the places they occupy by nature are different, some of them intermediary and some circular. How do their

¹Maqa...p.224; cf. Shifā'.p.410

natures become one if they have the capacity for corruption and generation? A common material becomes necessary for them since it cannot be conceived that a body is coming into being from another body, so it is not possible (permitted) that the cause of the existences is only the heavenly bodies. Since the matter of the four is common, it is not possible that the cause of the existence of their matter is more than one thing. And since their forms are different, it is not possible that the causes of the forms are different and more than one thing. They are limited to four things or to four species because they are four forms.¹

The philosophers believe that the elements are four in number and they are by nature different with respect to their places. The motions of the heavenly bodies are circular and those of the corrupt things pertain to a place, that is why their proximate origin implies change and motion.

Production of other Bodies

Al-Ghazālī further states:

The other bodies are produced by the mixture of the elements. First of all, are the production of ether from vapour, smoke, flame, and the like. Secondly, minerals; thirdly, plants; fourthly, animals; and then

¹Maqa...p.221.

the grade of man follows. All of them are produced by the mixture of the elements. Moreover, from the mixture of the form of water and air, vapour is produced; and from the mixture of the form of fire and earth smoke is produced.¹

Al-Ghazali says, as the Muslim philosophers assert: And then the forms emanate from the giver of the forms, so whenever there comes about a mixture stronger and more complete than that and there is added to it certain conditions, there comes about capability for the form of mineral substances and these forms also emanate from the giver of forms. Then if the mixture becomes more complete than that, plants result. If it is still more complete, animals results, and the most complete mixture consists in the seed of the human being which has the capacity for accepting the form of humanity. The cause of these capabilities is the interweaving of the heavenly and earthly movements.²

Thus, according to the Muslim philosophers' belief the universe is hierarchical. At the summit of their system is the most perfect being, the First Principle, from this being proceeds less perfect beings. The first thing having being that emanated from Him was the noblest; thereafter came a descent from the nobler to the lower, until the

¹Maqa...p.223.

²Ibid. p.224.

lowliest of all was reached. First was Intelligence; then Soul; then the Body of Heaven; then the materials of the four Elements with their forms - their materials are common to all, only their forms differ. Matter in so far as it is matter, does not become; for if it did, it would need other matter and infinite regress would follow. Matter only becomes in so far it is combined with form. Everything that comes into being, comes into being from something else, and this must either give rise to an infinite regress and lead directly to infinite matter which is impossible, even if one assumes an eternal mover, for there is no actual infinite; or the forms must be interchangeable in the substratum, eternally and in rotation. There must, therefore, according to the philosophers, be an eternal movement which produces this interchange in the eternally transitory things. When one form is removed, another is assumed. It is transition from potentiality to actuality. The materia prima is itself eternal.

The Relation between the First Principle and the World

It has been observed that the Muslim Neoplatonists, in their ontology separate the Necessary Being from all possible beings; while in their cosmology they consider

the world as an emanation of the Necessary Being. They try to maintain the absolute transcendence of the First Principle, by keeping it aloof from all other emanations. Further, emanation itself is intellection by the First Principle of its own essence. It is this intellection and the knowledge of its own essence that brings all things into being. The act of intellection is eternal, and the manifestation of the world is the First Principle's eternal knowledge of itself. Since this emanation is grounded finally in the intellectual nature of the First Principle, it has the character of unalterable rational necessity. The world exists eternally with the Principle. For the philosophers the world is an eternal existent, but since it is in itself contingent, in its entirety it needs the Necessary Being and is dependent upon it eternally. The meaning of procession, according to the philosophers, is necessity through another, that is the First Principle. So, the world is eternal and so are the movements of the spheres. In their opinion, priority resides in the causal, so the final cause precedes the effect in the mind and thought of the Necessary Being, not in existence, for example the rays of the Sun with the Sun itself.¹ The derivative (mustafād) being comes by

¹Maga...p.149.

necessity through another. So in this perspective the world derives ultimately its existence from the First Principle or the Necessary Being. It is an eternal effect of its Principle.

Conclusion

The origin of the world thus came to be regarded as a Procession or Emanation from the First Principle, the primordial Unity, rather than as a creation by the fiat of absolute will. It existed eternally with its First Cause. Once the First Cause had initiated the world-process, he left it to continue by itself. Leaving the dynamic idea of God, the Muslim philosophers supported the concept of the transcendental unity of God.

CHAPTER III

Al-Ghazālī's Criticism of the Philosophers
in the Tahāfut

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Introduction

The Muslim Neoplatonists upheld the position, as shown in the preceding chapter, that the world as a whole is eternal. They believed that the world co-existed with God in the same way as the light with the Sun and that God's priority to the world is priority in essence, not in time. Matter has always existed, though continually taking different forms. But as Muslims, they did affirm that God is the Creator and Agent of the world. According to them the procession of a temporal being from an eternal being is absolutely impossible. This is in conformity with the Aristotelian notion of change as a process by which what is merely "potential being" passes over through "form" into "actual being".

According to al-Ghazālī eternal emanation and creation are two contradictory notions. In the Tahāfut he has undertaken a refutation of the philosophers' beliefs, because of the various contradictions involved in their arguments.

Preliminary Discussion

Al-Ghazālī's main philosophic object in Tahāfut al-falāsifa is to point out the insufficiency of reason as a guide to the truth. This he endeavours to achieve by invalidating the conclusions of reason in the field of metaphysics. In the introduction to the Tahāfut he remarks that there are some thinkers, whom he lists as theists, who, in their pride, have rejected religious authority merely on the basis of the authority of certain grandiose names such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others.¹ Bewildered by the vast knowledge attributed to those geniuses, they only desired to elevate themselves above the mass of the people by disdaining religious admonitions. It is to eradicate this ^{evil} ~~by its~~ ~~root~~ that he wants to demolish their entire philosophical superstructure. Al-Ghazālī goes on to explain in detail four basic principles upon which his criticism is based:

1. It is not in his power to discuss the doctrines of all ancient philosophers - for each of them contradicted his predecessors, including Aristotle, who criticized his teacher Plato most bitterly, saying: "Plato is dear

¹Taha...p.38 (Bouyges ed. Beirut, 1962).

to us; and truth is dear, too. Nay, truth is dearer than Plato¹"; he would confine his attention to the inconsistencies which are found in the theories of the Muslim philosophers - al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Aristotle is regarded as the greatest philosopher who refuted a number of the doctrines of the philosophers and established the best of his own. This proves that metaphysics, far from being founded on certain irrefutable axioms, such as mathematics and logic, is built on guess work and unproved hypotheses. Thus, there is nothing fixed and constant in the philosophers' position. Even the interpreters and commentators of Aristotle differed among themselves. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, concentrates only on the refutation of the philosophical thought of his day, as it emerges from the writings of the two most faithful Muslim Aristotelians² al-Farabi and Avicenna, particularly those of Avicenna.

2. Philosophers and sects differ:

(a) Firstly, in the use of certain terms, such as "substance", which lead to controversies. But al-Ghazālī does not intend to undertake the refutation of this terminology and its use, for this belongs rather to philology

¹ Ibid. p.40; cf. Aristotle's Ethics Nichomachea. sec.vi, 1096a15.

² Taha...p.40.

and casuistry than to his enquiry.

(b) Secondly, they differ on mathematical, astronomical, and geometrical sciences, which are wrongly rejected by some thinkers on religious grounds, which do not really contradict the fundamentals of religion. He who imagines that it is his religious duty, to refute such sciences - as mathematics - will in fact do more harm to religion.

(c) Thirdly, they differ on metaphysical doctrines, such as the doctrine of the world's beginning in time, creation ex-nihilo, the attributes of God etc., in all of which the philosophers negate the fundamentals of religion. Therefore, his struggle will consist in refuting their metaphysical views.¹

3. Al-Ghazālī says:

Since his purpose is to disillusion those who think too highly of the philosophers, and consider them to be infallible, and since he has undertaken to expose the incoherence and inconsistencies involved in their philosophical thought, he will try to refute what they believed and not to defend something of his own.²

4. The philosophers in order to confuse people, claim that metaphysics is a difficult and complicated science whose understanding requires a good knowledge of mathematics and logic. But al-Ghazālī says that mathematics is no ^{more} ~~less~~

¹Ibid. pp. 41-43.

²Ibid. p. 43.

necessary to metaphysics than to medicine or grammar. Logic, on the other hand, is undoubtedly needed; and it is by no means confined to the philosophers. The Mutakallimūn consider it to^{be} a fundamental element in their preparation. The philosophers, however, give it a different name and use other terminology. In order to destroy their false presumptions, al-Ghazālī meets the philosophers on their own ground by using their terminology.¹ What he saw to his dismay was that the philosophers - al-Fārābī and Avicenna - at points did violence, without any philosophical justification, to the principles of religion. Al-Ghazālī's empirical and theological spirit revolted very strongly against this. He says that the positive facts of religion cannot be sacrificed for sheer metaphysical speculation, nor can they be interpreted externally from the point of view of a preconceived system of philosophy. These are to be interpreted intrinsically and reckoned on their own grounds. The Muslim philosophers failed to take the empirical standpoint. They had also been slow in realizing that notwithstanding the great breadth of outlook that the study of Greek philosophy brought to the Muslims, there was in the ultimate analysis

¹Ibid. pp.44-45.

a gulf between the inspiration of the Qur'ānic teachings and the spirit of Hellenism. Carried away by the enthusiasm to bring a reconciliation between philosophy and religion, al-Fārābī and Avicenna, according to al-Ghazālī, had so compressed the dogma of Islamic religion within the moulds of Aristotelian and Platonic, or rather Neoplatonic, systems as to fall into a morass of inconsistencies or get implicated in heretical positions. His general position is that the truths of the positive facts of religion can neither be proved nor disproved, and to do otherwise leads the philosophers to take more often to nonsensical positions.

All this al-Ghazālī brought out in his Tahāfut with the most accomplished understanding and admirable skill, and with a "transcendental" dialectic. He selects twenty problems for investigation and exposes contradictions involved in the philosophers' theories. The problem which al-Ghazālī considers the most important, is that of the eternity of the world, to which he allots the ^{te} greatest space, almost a quarter of his book. This is one of the most challenging and uncompromising problems in the conflict between religion and philosophy.

The advocates of Sunnism consider the eternity of the universe to be the most pernicious thesis of the philosophers and vehemently combat it.

Al-Ash^carī (d.324/935) wrote a refutation of the eternity of the world, in his kitāb al-Fusūl, which is probably the earliest treatise dealing with this question;¹ and Ibn-Hazm (d.457/1064) made the doctrine a dividing line between the Sunnite and the heretic. Sunnites cannot possibly concede the philosophers' belief in the eternity of the world, for with them there is nothing eternal except God. All else is originated (ḥādith). To make anything co-eternal with God is to violate the strict principle of monotheism, for that infringes the absoluteness and infinity of God and reduces Him to the position of an artificer. Virtually, the doctrine leads ~~derives~~ one to the materialist's position that the world is an independent universe, a self-subsistent system, which develops by itself, and can be understood by itself. All this was hard to swallow for a theologian like al-Ghazālī.

¹Ibn ^cAsākir, Tabyīn Kādhīb al-muftarī. Damascus, 1347/1928.
p.128.

Discussion on the Eternity of the World

The arguments of the philosophers for the eternity of the world start with certain statements:

- (a) The proofs from cause and will;
- (b) the proof from time;
- (c) the proof from the possibility of the world as a whole; and
- (d) the eternity of matter.

The First Argument and its Discussion

The first argument of the philosophers is based on the presumption of the notion of cause. (i) That every effect has a cause to determine its occurrence; (ii) cause must be the action of some external force other than the effect; and (iii) cause when executed must immediately lead to the effect. For the world's coming from non-existence to existence there certainly should have been some cause; this cause could not be a physical one for ex hypothesi none existed yet. If this cause arose from an act of will of God at some specific time, then the divine will itself should have been determined by some other cause. This cause which led God to change His mind should certainly be outside His mind; and this is not

possible, for nothing outside Him existed yet. Thus, the philosophers are forced to conclude that either nothing ever arose from the being of God - which is not true, for the world does exist - or that the world must have been in existence from all eternity, as an immediate effect of His eternal existence, for the procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible.¹

Al-Ghazālī declines to subscribe to any one of the assumptions stated above and shows that the belief in the origination of the world from the eternal will of God at a specific moment of time as selected by Him involves no violation of the fundamental principles of logic. The assumptions of the philosophers that every effect has a cause and that a cause is a force external to its effect, do not have a logical coerciveness about it. It is legitimate to believe that God's will does not have any cause or at least that this cause does not lie outside His will but in itself. Similarly, it is not logically necessary that the effect should follow a cause immediately, for it is not logically contradictory to hold the notion of a "delayed effect".² God may have decreed from

¹Ibid. p.49.

²Ibid. p.51.

eternity that the world should appear at a certain time. According to the Qur'ān, God has but to say to a thing: "Be, and it is".¹ So He said to the world "Be" but not yet. Then the world came into existence at the appointed time. Al-Ghazālī says that it is possible to think that God's will is eternal and yet an object of that will has occurred at some period in time. Here a distinction is made between the eternity of God's will and the eternity of the object of His will. God, for example, can eternally will that al-Fārābī and Avicenna should be born at such and such a time and that the one should be born before the other. Hence it is not logically illicit to affirm the Sunnites' belief that God eternally willed that the world should come into being at such and such a definite moment in time.

But the philosophers point out a difficulty here. They say that an act of will is a complete cause of an event, and when once the will acts, the event must follow immediately unless there is an obstacle. In the case of God's willing the world there is no obstacle, so any delay would be inexplicable. Again, it is impossible to

¹Cf. Qur. 2:117; 16:40; and also Ch.I, pp.18-20

to find out a specific determinant (mukhassis) for God's eternal choice of a particular moment for the creation of the world. All moments of time are completely similar; how is it possible to choose between two completely similar things? Why was not the world created earlier or later than when it was created?

One of the answers to these questions is that there arises no question of the world being created earlier or later, for time as yet had no existence. It was created along with the creation of the world, that is, both the world and time are finite in duration.

Al-Ghazālī adds further that should one assume with the philosophers that time is infinite, then at any present moment that infinite time has been brought to an end, and a time that has an end is not infinite but finite.¹

Al-Ghazālī's standpoint, however, is that God just arbitrarily chose one particular moment rather than another for the world's coming into being. One need not ask any more about this choice, for God's will is completely undetermined. His will does not depend upon distinctions

¹Taha...p.52.

in the outside world, for it is itself the producer of all the distinctions therein. The creation of distinctions is in fact the true significance of God's will. God chooses a particular moment for the creation of the world as He chooses a particular direction for the movement of the spheres of the heavens, in some cases from East to West, in other from West to East, as described in the Aristotelian astronomy, even when the reversal of directions would have made no difference.¹ There is no way to explain God's choice either in one case or the other. The difficulty posed by the philosophers arises because of their misguided attempt to understand the nature of the divine will entirely in terms of man's will. Al-Ghazālī says that certainly God's will is not like that of man's, as God's knowledge is not like that of man. So far as God's knowledge is concerned, the philosophers admit that it differs from man's knowledge in so many respects that in their final position it becomes indeed an inexplicable mystery. According to them, God possesses the knowledge of all universals without this knowledge necessitating plurality, without its being

¹Ibid. pp.60-61.

²Ibid. pp.56-59.

additional to His essence, and without its multiplicity in proportion to the multiplicity of the object known. Some of them assert after Aristotle that God is the knower, the knowledge, and the known, and that the three are one. If one judges all this by what applies to man's knowledge, it will be found to be an utter impossibility.¹ While the philosophers admit that God's knowledge cannot be compared with man's knowledge, they insist upon drawing a comparison between God's will and man's will. This is exactly the incoherence of the philosophers, and their thought taken as a whole reveals a number of such inconsistencies. Indeed, the philosophers' very notion of eternal creation is self-contradictory and meaningless. Is it sense to speak of the creation of that which exists eternally? If God and the prime matter are both eternal existents, does it make sense to say that the one is the cause of the other? Can the relation between two existents qua existents be regarded as a causal one? The philosophers believe that the world is eternal and still they ascribe it to a creator. This theory is, therefore, even in its original formulation self-contradictory.²

¹Ibid. p.53.

²Ibid. pp.110-11.

Al-Ghazālī further points out that the doctrine of the eternity of the world is impossible, because it leads to the affirmation of the view that the celestial spheres have an indefinite number of rotations whose units are impossible to count, although they have among them definite proportions and a well-calculated number. He describes in detail these proportions. He says:

The fact is that these revolutions can be divided into one-sixth, or one-fourth, or a half. For instance, the sphere of the Sun completes one revolution in one year, while that of Saturn makes one in thirty years. Therefore, the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of those of the Sun. And the revolutions of Jupiter are one-twelfth of those of the Sun, for Jupiter completes one revolution in twelve years.¹

The development of this argument has an interest only in so far as it shows the astronomical and mathematical knowledge at the time of al-Ghazālī and the way in which the infinite was conceived. The philosophers maintain that, in spite of the fact that the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of the Sun, they are equally infinite. If the philosophers point out that the error in the argument of al-Ghazālī consists in his considering those circular

¹Ibid. pp.53-54; cf. Iqti...pp.17-18.

movements as an aggregate of units, but those movements have no real existence, for the past is no more and the future not yet, Al-Ghazālī answers that:

This number must be either odd or even, or both, or neither the one nor the other. If they say that it is odd and even at the same time, or that it is neither one nor the other, the error of such a claim is evident. If they say it is even, the even becomes odd by adding one unit to it. How is it possible to add one unit to that which is infinite? If they say it is odd, the odd becomes even also by adding one unit. Again, how could this infinite number lack one unit which would make it odd? Thus, the philosophers are obliged to conclude that it is neither odd nor even.¹

The philosophers object that odd and even cannot describe adequately the infinite since such an explanation would necessarily imply that it is composed of present existing units. Al-Ghazālī replies that in the case of the world, one is actually facing a "whole" made of component units which constitute the rotations of the celestial spheres. Their number must necessarily be either odd or even.

Al-Ghazālī summarizes the argument: "Our aim is to prove that the philosophers cannot refute their opponents

¹Taha...p.54; cf. Iqti...p.18.

on the relationship between the eternal will and creation." ¹

Their theory of change in time, arising from an eternal changeless Cause without any act of His own in time, is unsatisfactory. There is no reason why He should not have created the world as a whole by a direct act of will in time, and not from eternity.

The Second Argument from Time

The second argument of the philosophers for the eternity of the world revolves around time. They put different constructions upon their notions of space and time. They assume time to be infinite and space finite, and yet consider time to be the measure of movement. One may ask how the existence of time is relevant to the existence of the world. It is so because of the philosophers' assumption that the existence of time depends on the existence of movement, and thus of a moving body. If it is proved that time is eternal, it would mean that a moving being - the world- is eternal. ² Al-Ghazālī in his response to the proof neither challenges the definition of time as the measure of movement, nor does he question

¹Taha...p.64.

²cf. Ross, W.D., Aristotle. p.89f.

the legitimacy of the inference of the eternity of movement from the eternity of time. He only argues that the time and the world were created together. God precedes the world in a non-temporal sense of "before".¹ The argument from time is introduced by the philosophers in conjunction with the problem of God's priority to the world. It is only on the assumption of this argument, that is, the eternity of God,² that they argue for the eternity of time.

Al-Ghazālī says:

The philosophers assert that he who affirms that the world is posterior to God and God prior to the world cannot/mean anything but that He is prior not temporally but essentially, like the natural priority of one to two, although they can exist together in temporal existence, or like the priority of cause to effect, for instance the priority of the movement of a man to the movement of his shadow which follows him, or the movement of the hand to the movement of the ring, or the movement of the hand in the water to the movement of the water, for all these things are simultaneous, but one is the cause, the other effect, for it is said that the shadow moves through the movement of the man and the water through the hand in the water, and the reverse is not said although they are simultaneous. If this is what you mean by saying that God is prior to the world, then it follows that they must both be either temporal or eternal, for it is

¹Taha...p.66.

²Cf. Naj...pp.256-57.

absurd that the one should be eternal and the other temporal. If it is meant that God is prior to the world and to time, not essentially, but temporally, then there was before the existence of the world and of time, a time in which the world was non-existent, since non-existence preceded the world and God preceded it during a long duration which had a final term but no initial one, and then there was before time an infinite time, which is self-contradictory. Therefore the assertion that time had a beginning is absurd. And if time - which is the expression of the measure of movement - is eternal, movement must be eternal. And the necessity of the eternity of movement implies the necessity of the eternity of the thing in motion, through the duration of which time endures.¹

This argument for the eternity of time, as formulated by the philosophers, is not a deduction from the nature of time and motion. It is not deduced from the argument that time must always have a "before" and an "after". It is deduced from the premise that God is eternal and the supposition of His temporal priority to the world. The discourse constitutes a hypothetical disjunctive syllogism:

If God is eternal, the world is eternal, and if God is temporal, the world is temporal;

¹Taha...pp.65-66.

God is eternal;
Therefore, the world is eternal.

But to prove that the world is eternal, all that is necessary, for the philosophers, is to prove that God's priority to the world is essential, and not temporal. This proof is not from the nature of time, but rather from the nature of God's priority and causality. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, has simply to show that the meaning of God's priority to the world and time is:

He existed without the world and without time, then He existed and with Him there was the world and there was time. And the meaning that He existed without the world is the existence of the essence of the Creator and the non-existence of the essence of the world. And the meaning of priority is the uniqueness of His existence.¹

The argument from time comes only in the discussion as a consequence of the supposition that God's priority is temporal. If one supposes God's priority temporal, it means that He precedes the world by infinite time. Infinite time in turn implies the world's eternity since time is the measure of motion and it does not exist without motion. Al-Ghazālī says that there is no reason why time

¹Ibid.

should not be finite, for the existence of time is taken to be only co-extensive with the existence of the moving world, and there is no evidence that this moving world is not finite. Any extension of time beyond this world thus has no more basis than imagination. Moreover, if time is nothing but an attribute of movement, then the only valid way to find out the extent of time is from the evidence of the extent of movement. But the philosophers say that whenever the world began, one can always conceive a time before it, and this time must be eternal. They then go on to deduce from this eternal time an eternal movement. According to al-Ghazālī, they have reversed the correct order of reasoning, and instead of inferring the extent of time from the extent of movement, they have inferred the extent of movement from the extent of time - an illicit process.

Again, the philosophers have another way of forcing their opponents to admit the eternity of time. They say:

You do not doubt God was able to create the world one year, a hundred years, a thousand years, and so ad infinitum, before He created it and that those possibilities are different in magnitude and number.

Therefore, it is necessary to admit something - before the existence of the world - which had a quantitative or measurable nature, and some parts of which would be greater in quantity or size than others.¹

¹Ibid. p.70.

Al-Ghazālī says that all this is the work of imagination. This plea will be invalid for three reasons:

Firstly, it is repugnant to reason. For reason shows that the supposition of the world's being larger or smaller by a cubit than it is is not like the supposition of black and white, or existence and non-existence, coming together. It is only the affirmation and denial of the same thing at the same time which is impossible, and to which all impossible things can be reduced. The assertion of the impossibility of a larger or smaller size is an arbitrary, unconvincing and false assertion.¹

This is indeed a silly and faulty assertion. Al-Ghazālī points out the important distinction between logical impossibility or necessity and factual or hypothetical impossibility or necessity. For God everything is possible but the logically impossible.

Then al-Ghazālī mentions the second reason:

Secondly, if the world is in the state it is, without the possibility of being larger or smaller than it is, then its existence, as it is, is necessary, not possible. But the necessary needs no cause. So then, either the philosophers deny the Creator as the materialists do, or that they deny the Causer of causes!²

¹Taha...Eng.Tr.p.44 (Ara.Text p.72)

²Taha...p.72.

But this is not their doctrine. Al-Ghazālī further says that the false argument of the philosophers authorizes their opponent (the Ash^carites) to oppose it by a similar one. He puts it:

Thirdly, the existence of the world was not possible before its existence, for indeed possibility - according to your theory - is coextensive with existence, neither more nor less. If you say: 'But then the eternal has passed from impotence to power', we answer: 'No, for the existence was not possible and therefore could not be brought about and the impossibility of a thing's happening that could not happen does not indicate impotence.' If you say: 'How can a thing which is impossible become possible?' We answer: 'But why should it be impossible that a thing should be impossible at one moment and possible at another?' If you say: 'The times are similar,' the answer is: 'But so are the measures, and why should one measure be possible and another, bigger or smaller by the width of a nail, impossible? And if the latter assumption is not impossible, the former is not impossible either.' And this is the way to oppose them.

But the true answer is that their supposition of possibilities makes no sense whatever. We concede only that God is eternal and powerful, and that His action never fails, ~~and~~ and there is nothing in this power that demands the assumption of a temporal extension, unless imagination confuses God's power with other things, and connects it with time.¹

¹Taha...pp.72-73; (Eng. Tr.pp.44-45).

The argument is carried by al-Ghazālī to a new point, that is, the analogy between space and time. He insists that one who believes in the finitude of space must consistently assume the existence of finite time, particularly when one holds the position that space, time, and movement in space are all related to one another. If the philosophers insist that it is impossible to think of an empty space, they should equally realize that it is impossible to conceive of an empty time. Al-Ghazālī goes on to say that the philosophers admit that space is finite, because it is an attribute of body which is finite. Why do they not admit likewise that time is finite, because it is an attribute of finite movement! He then shows the weakness of the philosophers' position that they are unable to prove the infinity of movement, though this according to their supposition should come first, that is, before the infinity of time.¹

Thus, the eternity of the world cannot be proved from the eternity of time.

The Third and Fourth Argument from Possibility and Matter

The philosophers maintain that the world existed as a possibility long before it actually came into existence.

¹Taha...pp.67-70.

They say that prior to its origination, the world must have either been possible (mumkin); or impossible (mumtani¹); or necessary (wājib). It is impossible that it should have been impossible; for that which is impossible in itself is never brought into existence. Again, it is impossible for it to have been necessary in itself; for that which is necessary in itself is never deprived of existence. It follows then that the existence of the world must have always been possible in itself, otherwise it would have never come into existence. The philosophers further say that this possibility cannot inhere in possibility itself, nor in the agent, nor in a non-substratum, for the possible is that which is in the process of becoming actual. Hence the subject of possibility is some substratum which is susceptible of possibility, and this is matter. Now, this matter cannot be considered to have originated. If it had originated, the possibility of its existence would have preceded its existence. In that case possibility would have existed in itself, but possibility existing in itself is unintelligible. Hence matter is eternal, and it is only the passing over of the forms to matter which is originated.²

¹Ibid. pp.73-74.

²Ibid. pp.74-80; cf. Ch.II, p.61.

Al-Ghazālī points out that possibility, like impossibility, is purely a subjective notion to which nothing need correspond in reality. If possibility requires an existence to correspond to it, so would impossibility require something to correspond to it, but there is no existing thing in concrete reality to which impossibility may be referred. Hence possibility like impossibility is merely a concept. The assumption of an existing substratum to which this concept may be related is to make a metaphysical leap from mere thought to actual existence and so to commit an ontological fallacy. Al-Ghazālī opposes the view that the creation of the world is always possible and that there is no time in which the world could not have been created. Its creation has been decreed from all eternity but achieved in time. Thus, creation is not concomitant with possibility as such. The possibility for creation and the principle of existence cannot be determined by "sooner" or "later". That which can be ascertained is the principle that the world was created, and this is the only possibility.

Discussion of the Creator and Creation

According to al-Ghazālī, the arguments of the philosophers are either full of contradictions or unproved

assumptions. And the most manifest inconsistencies and sheer baselessness of their assumptions become conspicuous when they try to explain the origination of the world from the Being of God, in terms of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. He demonstrates the dishonesty of the philosophers who say that God is the Agent and the Maker of the world; whereas in fact these words have only a metaphorical¹ and not a real significance to them. He says that all the philosophers, except the materialists, agree that the world has a maker, and that God is the maker and agent of the world and the world is His act and His work. But this is a dishonest distortion of their principles. There are three reasons why, according to them, the world as an act of God is inconceivable: (a) One of these reasons is to be found in the nature of the agent; (b) another, in the nature of the action; and (c) the third one, is in the relationship between the action and the agent.

(a) As concerns the first point, the agent must be willing, choosing, and knowing what he wills to be the agent of what he wills. But, according to the philosophers, God does not will, He has no attribute whatever, and what proceeds from Him proceeds by the compulsion of necessity. Al-Ghazālī

¹Taha...p.89.

says:

Agent means someone from whom there proceeds an act with the will to act according to choice and with the knowledge of the object willed. But, according to the philosophers, the world stands in relation to God as the effect to the cause. So it follows from Him by way of necessary causation. And, therefore, it cannot be imagined that God should have been able to avoid His action, even as the shadow is unavoidable to a person, or light to the Sun. Now, this has nothing to do with an action.¹

Al-Ghazālī answers that they have employed the expression of act only metaphorically, and as compared to a 'natural act'; only a voluntary act is a proper act. The proof of that is: if one assumes an event which is based on two facts, the one voluntary, and the other involuntary, the mind relates the act to the voluntary fact. The word 'agent' is used of one whose act proceeds from his will, and behold, the philosophers do not² regard God as endowed with will and choice!

(b) The second point is that according to the principle of the philosophers the world is eternal, but an 'act' implies temporal production. Al-Ghazālī says that the meaning of 'act' is 'to convert from not-being into being by producing it', and this cannot be imagined in the eternal, as what exists already cannot be brought into existence. Therefore,

¹Ibid.p.90.

²Ibid.p.93.

'act' implies a temporal product or origination, but according to the philosophers' opinion the world is eternal; how then could it be God's act? ¹ Then al-Ghazālī says, on behalf of the philosophers: "The philosophers may perhaps say: The meaning of 'product' is that 'which exists after its non-existence'." ² Al-Ghazālī answers that it is impossible to say that previous non-existence was connected with Him, since the agent cannot exert influence upon non-existence; and it is equally impossible to say 'both together', for it is clear that non-existence is in no way connected with the agent, for non-existence qua non-existence needs no agent at all. It follows, therefore, that what is connected with Him is connected with Him in so far as it is an existent, and what proceeds from Him is pure existence, and that there is no other relation to Him than that of existence. Temporal production implies, therefore, the contradictory statements that it must be connected with an agent, that it cannot be produced, if it is not preceded by non-existence, and that non-existence cannot be conceived with the agent. Moreover, to make

¹Ibid.p.94.

²Ibid.

non-existence a condition for the act's becoming an act is to impose a condition although the agent cannot exert any influence under any condition. Al-Ghazālī retorts that the relation, as the philosophers conceive, between God and the world is that of the power which holds the world together. He says:

Our answer is that our aim in this question is to show that you philosophers use those venerable names without justification, and that God according to you is not a true agent, nor the world truly His act, and that you ¹ apply this word metaphorically - not in its real sense.

(c) The third reason why it is impossible for the philosophers to admit according to their principle that the world is the act of God is because of a condition which is common to the agent and the act, namely, their assertion that out of one only one can proceed.² Now the First Principle is one in every respect, and the world is composed out of different constituents. Therefore, according to their principle, it cannot be imagined that the world is the act of God. Al-Ghazālī says that the Muslim philosophers' adherence to this view is the clearest evidence that their verbal acknowledgment of creation is ~~a~~ mere dissimulation

¹Ibid.p.97.

²Ibid.

and duplicity. The problem of emanation with the philosophers, however, arises because of their over-emphasis on the abstract unity of God. They never understood the transcendental immanence of God. Again, creation through an act of volition implies both will and knowledge, and these, according to the philosophers, cannot be predicated of God as attributes apart from His essence without doing violence to His absolute unity. In their opinion, both will and knowledge have limitations; will, in particular, implies a deficiency in a being who wills, for it means that he desires or wants to have that which he lacks; for they thought of the divine will in terms of human will. Hence the philosophers elaborated an ingenious theory of emanation which contrives to erect a cosmological staircase between God's stable unity and the changing and varied multiplicity of the world. This staircase consists of a finely graded series of intelligences and souls of the celestial spheres, each emanating from the other in an hierarchical fashion. Determinism implicit in this emanational world-view is so opposed to the theistic voluntarian of Sunnites' world-view that al-Ghazālī launches the most vehement attack against it. His strictures against this grand cosmological construction, made out of various imported ideas, are the strongest and

the bitterest of all the arguments that may be found in the entire Tahāfut. All this, he inveighs:

Is idle speculation; arbitrary reasoning; wild guess work; and darkness piled upon darkness. If someone says that he saw things of this kind in a dream, it would be inferred that he was suffering from some disease. Even an insane person could not rest satisfied with such a supposition.¹

The philosophers circumscribed God's knowledge to that of His self only. It is a strange theory, says al-Ghazālī, which makes the effect know of its cause but lets the cause remain ignorant of its effect. Again, al-Ghazālī differs with the philosophers with regard to the range and mode of God's knowledge. His criticism of the emanation theory consists in showing:

(i) Firstly, that it fails to account for the multiplicity and the composition of the world; and

(ii) Secondly, that it does not succeed in safeguarding the absolute unity of God.

(i) If the formula that from one only one proceeds be observed logically, then all the beings in the world would be units, each of which would be the effect of some other unit above it, as it would be the cause of some other unit

¹Ibid. pp.100-101.

below it in a linear fashion. But in fact this is not the case. Every object, according to the philosophers themselves, is composed at least of form and matter.¹ How does a composite thing such as a body then come into existence? Does it have only one cause? If the answer is in the affirmative, then the assertion that only one proceeds from one becomes null and void. If, on the other hand, a composite has a composite cause, then the same question will be repeated in the case of this cause so on and so forth, till one arrives at a point where the compound necessarily meets the simple. This contact between the compound effect and the unitary cause wherever it occurs would falsify the principle - that only one proceeds from one. Strictly speaking, all the existents in the universe are characterized by composition; and only the First Principle, that is God alone can be said to possess true unity, for in Him alone there is a complete identity of essence and existence. This would necessarily lead to the conclusion that either the principle - only one from one - fails to account for the composition and multiplicity which is apparent in the world, or even God does

¹ Ibid. pp.98-99.

not possess a genuine unity. But the philosophers cloak the issue with their artificial subtleties and the grandiose constructions they put upon their emanational foundations. What earthly or unearthly relation is there, al-Ghazālī questions, between the first intelligence having a possible existence and the body of the sphere of the second intelligence which is supposed to proceed from it? Neither logic nor experience can substantiate this wild supposition and as such it is no more than pure nonsense. Further, how is it possible that from two kinds of knowledge of the first intelligence, that is, knowledge of the First Principle and that of itself, should arise two kinds of existence, firstly, that of the second intelligence, and secondly, that of the soul of the highest sphere? How can they say that the knowledge of a thing leads to the existence of a thing without committing an obvious ontological fallacy? How can the knower emanate from the knowing? Al-Ghazālī is amazed and deplores, that of all people philosophers should believe in such mythical nonsense.¹ Even if the triplicity with which the philosophers characterize the first intelligence should be taken for granted, (which indeed cannot be done) it fails to account for all

¹Ibid. pp. 99-100.

that they want to deduce from it. The body of the highest sphere, which according to them proceeds only from one aspect of the essence of the first intelligence, is surely not single in nature but composite and that in three ways:

(a) Firstly, as stated before, it is composed of form and matter, as indeed all bodies are according to philosophers' own admission. Though form and matter always exist conjointly in all bodies, yet they are so different from each other that one cannot be the cause of the other. Hence, the form and matter of the body of the highest sphere require two principles for their existence and not one. A single aspect of the three-fold character of the first intelligence fails to account for it.¹

(b) Secondly, the body of this sphere has a definite size. Its having a definite size is something additional to the bare fact of its existence. Certainly, it could have come into existence with a different size, bigger or smaller than it is. Hence, over and above that which necessitated the existence of the body of the sphere, there should be an additional cause to account for the adoption of this particular size.²

¹Ibid. p.105.

²Ibid.

(c) Thirdly, in the highest heaven, there are marked out two points as its poles, which are fixed. This was admitted by the philosophers in accordance with the Aristotelian astronomy. Now, either all the parts of the highest sphere are similar, in which case it is impossible to explain why two points should be chosen in preference to all the others as its poles; or they are different, some of them possessing properties which are not possessed by the others. Hence, it is required that there should be another aspect in the first intelligence, which should be the cause for the differences in the various parts of the highest sphere, which differences alone would justify the choice of two points therein to be the poles.¹

In view of what has been stated above, it is sheer "ignorance" on the part of the philosophers to hold that the body of the highest sphere has emanated only from one aspect of the essence of the first intelligence. Either the principle that only one proceeds from one is true, in which case the first intelligence which is not a mere triplicity but a whole multiplicity remains unexplained; or it ~~may~~ is possible that "many may proceed from one." ²

¹Ibid. pp.105-6.

²Ibid. p.106.

In the latter case infinite variety and plurality of the world can directly be derived from the unity of God and there is no need to erect the emanational staircase between Him and the world.

The above principle certainly collapses when one comes to the second intelligence, for it is supposed to be, in one of its aspects, the cause of the sphere of the fixed stars.¹ These are twelve hundred or so and are different in magnitude, shape, position, colour, and in respect of their special functions in nature, etc. Each one of these factors in every single star needs a separate cause as its determinant. All this necessitates a bewildering multiplicity in the second intelligence and also indirectly presupposes the same in the first intelligence in so far as the latter is the emanative cause of the former.²

¹According to the then Greek or Arab astronomer's reckoning in Ptolemy's *Almagest* the number of the stars mentioned is 1,025. This number was generally accepted by the Arab astronomers. ^cAbd-ar-Rahman ibn-^cUmar as-Sufi (291/903 - 376/986), one of the Muslim astronomers, in his kitāb al kawākib al-Thābita al-Musawwar (Illustrated Book of the Fixed Stars) adds that there are many more stars than 1,025, but they are so faint that it is not possible to count them.

²Taha...p.107.

If the above argument fails to convince the philosophers, there is another way to show them that the first intelligence is more than a mere triplicity. Is the self-knowledge of the first intelligence identical with its essence or other than it? It is not possible that it should be identical, for knowledge is not the same thing as that which is known. Hence, the first intelligence is not a triplicity but a quadruplicity, namely, its essence, its knowledge of itself, its knowledge of the First Principle, and its being a possible existent by itself.¹ To all these four aspects there can be added yet another, namely, its being a necessary being whose necessity is derived from an external cause. All this proves that the first intelligence has five aspects and not three, as arbitrarily assumed by the philosophers. Whether the first intelligence has five aspects or three, it certainly is not of purely unitary character according to the philosophers' own admission. This shows that there is something in the effect which is not present in the cause, that is, the First Principle, and this is scandalous.

(ii) Not only does the formula that only one proceeds from one become shame-facedly invalid; but

¹Ibid. p.104.

further according to al-Ghazālī, the entire emanational line of argument does great violence to the concept of God's unity, and thus, nullifies the very purpose for which it is adopted. There is no reason, according to him, that the very arguments which the philosophers advance to establish the triple character of the first intelligence should not be applied to God Himself. One of the aspects of plurality in the first intelligence, according to the philosophers, is its being a possible existence by itself. It may be asked: Is its being possible identical with its existence or other than it? If it is identical, no plurality would arise from it. If it is other than its existence, then why should it not be possible to say that there is as much plurality in the First Principle, that is, God Himself, for He not only has existence but is necessarily existent? The necessity of existence as such is other than existence itself. In fact, existence may be considered to be a generic concept divided into necessary and possible. If one specific difference is an addition to existence per se in one case, it should be considered so in the other also. If the philosophers insist that the possibility of existence is other than existence in case of

the first intelligence, through the same argument they should admit that necessity of existence is different from existence in the case of the First Principle. Similarly, al-Ghazālī asks:

Is the first intelligence's knowledge of its Principle identical with its existence and with its knowledge of itself or other than the two? If it is identical, then there will be no plurality in its nature. But if it is other than the two, then such a plurality exists also in the First Principle, for He too knows Himself and also what is other than Himself.¹

Thus, al-Ghazālī contends that either there can be no plurality in the first intelligence or if it is there, then it is for the same reason in the First Principle too, and therefore, the beings characterized by diversity and plurality would directly proceed from Him. Al-Ghazālī forces this conclusion upon the philosophers through their own logic.

For himself al-Ghazālī believes that:

The First Principle is an omnipotent and willing agent; He does what He wills, and ordains as He likes, and He creates the similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He wills. The impossibility of such a belief is neither a self-evident truth nor a matter of inferential knowledge.²

¹Ibid. pp.102-3.

²Ibid. p.109.

He, in support of his agnosticism with regard to the modus operandi of God's creativity, alludes to the Tradition: "Ponder the product of God's creative activity; do not dwell on His essence."¹ Al-Ghazālī confesses that the problem of God's creativity remains ever beyond the comprehension of human understanding. The enquiry into the manner in which the world proceeded from God's will, he urges, is "an idle and aimless venture."²

To repeat again, the view of God as reflective thought, reflective in the literal sense of turning back upon itself, has been subjected to severe criticism by al-Ghazālī. According to him, self-knowledge of a literal and direct sort is an impossibility. He argues with Avicenna that self-knowledge even in the case of God implies an epistemological subject-object dualism, and therefore would impede the philosophers' thesis of the absolute unity of the First Principle. In fact, the philosophers make the first intelligence superior to and "nobler" than the First Principle in so far as from the First Principle only one thing proceeds; whereas from

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

the first intelligence three things proceed. Further, the First Principle does not know what proceeds from it; but its effect knows its cause and its three effects.

Al-Ghazālī feels so bitter at this conception that he goes to the length of saying that the philosophers by limiting God's knowledge to the sphere of self-knowledge virtually reduce Him to the status of the dead.¹ He is very emphatic with regard to the all-circumscribing knowledge of God: "He says: "God knows the creeping of the black ant upon the rugged rock in the dark night, and He perceives the movement of the mote in the midst of the air."²

Al-Ghazālī thus differs with the philosophers with regard to the range and mode of God's knowledge, power, and will. He strongly affirms the Sunnites' belief in God's attributes and His having created the world out of sheer nothingness at a specific moment of time, yet he insists that it is not for us humans to have even the shadow of comprehension of God's creative activity. All philosophical explanations have their ultimate termini, and the doctrine of creation ex-nihilo is one of them.³

¹Ibid. p.103.

²Cf. Muslim Theology. p.302; cf. also Qur. 10:61

³Cf. Tennant, F.R., Philosophical Theology. ii, p.125f; & also Laird, J., Theism and Cosmology. Ch. iv-v.

Conclusion

Al-Ghazālī concludes that the philosophical speculation cannot form the basis of truth. He exposed the philosophers' position by pointing out their logical inconsistencies, and tried to show that on rational grounds the philosophers in their doctrine of creation could achieve nothing. The designing of the world, which implies a designer, further implies that the Designer is also the world's Creator. Moreover, God's attributes must immeasurably transcend man's attributes of similar kind. Al-Ghazālī accuses the philosophers of attempting to prove no more than a world-architect, working upon a pre-existing matter. Out of the negative arguments, however, the following are the positive implications:

1. God is a free agent, not a cause constantly conjoined with its effect.
2. He acted without a determinant, other than His will for He is Fā'il-Mukhtār.
3. Time did not exist before the creation of the world; time before the world is merely a figment of the imagination.
4. The world is by nature contingent, and there must be some determinant of its specificity. Al-Ghazālī's position

here is based on the belief that God's will needs no external determinant since it is of its nature to choose in accordance with His eternal knowledge.

But al-Ghazālī's attitude in the Tahāfut is mainly negative. He refutes the arguments of the philosophers on ~~the~~ rational grounds and thus has shown that with their premises and methods they could not achieve any certainty. The Muslim Neoplatonists professed to prove everything by reason, but reason cannot demonstrate the metaphysical subtleties and al-Ghazālī has shown a destruction of rationalism by reason itself.

CHAPTER IV

Al-Ghazālī's Views on the Doctrine of Creation

CHAPTER IVAl-Ghazali's Views on the Doctrine of CreationIntroduction

Al-Ghazālī's deep love of the Faith made him defend his religious standpoint with all his power of belief and arguments. The task which he undertook was a dual one:

Firstly, he had to refute the philosophers' belief in the eternity of the world, and for that, as mentioned earlier, he devoted one book - Maqāsid al-falāsifa - to expounding their views, "so that he might not be suspected of neglecting the essential basis of their proof"; and another - Tahāfut al-falāsifa - to criticizing and refuting their arguments.

And finally, the exposition of his own belief. Al-Ghazālī builds the doctrine of the creation of the world on the Sunnites' foundations and supports it with arguments acceptable to the minds of the community as well as to the religious institutions of his time. He strongly adheres to the belief that God existed alone, and there was nothing with Him. The world is by nature contingent and there must be a cause for its origination. By cause, al-Ghazālī,

means nothing but the 'determinant', which is God. The existence of the world, before its origination, was equally possible and not-possible. God brought it into existence out of absolute non-existence, by an action of His own, which is the result of His will and power, and which is not subject to the laws of nature. God is a free agent, not a cause which is conjoined with its effect. Al-Ghazālī also believes that time, too, began with the world.

Al-Ghazālī analysed and criticized the views of the philosophers' belief in the eternity of the world in order to affirm and prove the doctrine of the temporal origin of the world, though he does not explicitly argue in the Tahāfut for any positive views of his own. His reflection on the doctrine of creation involves two main trends:

1. The first embodies a negative critical attitude which takes two forms:

(a) One of these forms is his attitude towards the philosophers, as discussed before where he impeached their arguments, as he says, "in the manner which a denying defendant would adopt, and not in the manner which a¹ provingasserter would adopt."

¹Taha...pp. 62,66.

(b) The other form concerns al-Ghazali's attitude to the theologians. He outlines this in his book al-Munqidh and on various other occasions in his other works like Ihyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn and al-Iqtisād fi'l-I'tiqād. Al-Ghazālī criticizes the methods of the theologians and rejects the suitability of their scholastic discourses. He condemns them for limiting their pursuit of knowledge to the extent to which rational proofs and logical arguments can take them. He asserts that the purpose of theology is the preservation of the tenets of faith from confusion by sceptics. The proofs offered by the theologians appear to him to be weak and insufficient for the purpose of fulfilling this object. Although he concedes that the theologians had done good work in defending the tenets of faith, he nevertheless says that:

They based their arguments on premisses which they took from their opponents and which they were compelled to admit by naive belief (taqlīd), or the consensus of the community, or bare acceptance of the Qur'ān and the Traditions. For the most part their efforts were devoted to making explicit the contradictions of their opponents and criticizing them in respect of the logical consequences of what they admitted. This was of little use in the case of one who admitted nothing at all save logically necessary truths.¹

¹The Faith and Practice. p.28; cf. also Muslim Theology...p.219.

2. The other trend comprises the formulation and presentation of al-Ghazālī's views and doctrine concerning the origination of the world. Al-Ghazālī promised in the Tahāfut to write another book to be entitled as Qawā'id al-^caqā'id, in which he would endeavour to substantiate the special theological views and the doctrine which might prove the temporal origin of the world, on the lines he adhered to in the Tahāfut.¹ The most important of his works for the purpose of studying his theological views and the doctrine of creation is al-Iqtisād, while his popular book on this subject is Ihya'.

The sound methodology in the study of al-Ghazālī's views is to concentrate on the main works of undoubted authenticity, while to depend on others in so far as they are not incompatible with the former.²

Al-Ghazālī's Attitude towards Revelation and Reason

According to al-Ghazālī, the doctrine of the origination and the creation of the world is a matter of faith, though it can be supported by reasoning. His fundamental

¹Taha...p.109; cf. also Iqti...p.96.

²Cf. W.M.Watt: 'The Study of al-Ghazālī', Oriens, 1961.pp.121-24; & 'The Authenticity of the Works attributed to al-Ghazālī', JRAS, 1952. pp.24-45; cf. also Bouyges: Essai de Chronologie.

notion is that the ultimate source of knowledge of faith is revelation.¹ ^cAql (reason) itself is no rival of revelation: it is no more than common sense and regulated thinking, which may be employed by men about religion; at best it acts as a preservative against errors in deduction and arguments. The primary source, so far as the articles of faith are concerned, can be furnished only by revelation.

Al-Ghazālī holds the view that the articles of faith should be based upon the Qur'ān, and the Sunna. But the right course is to follow them with moderation - and by moderation he means following the Traditions with the methods of speculation. In the introduction to al-Iqtisād, al-Ghazālī wages a very severe campaign against the Hashwiyya for their acceptance of a naive belief in the matter of the doctrine of faith, and for their adherence to the literal meaning of the religious texts (an-nusus ash-shar^cīyya). He also directs an attack against the philosophers and the extremists amongst the Mu'tazilites for their having exaggerated the power and authority of the mind and its freedom, so that thereby they put reason in opposition to scriptural proofs (qawāṭi^c ash-sharī^ca). Al-Ghazali says:

The tendency of these is toward remissness (tafrīt) while the tendency of the others is towards extravagance

¹Iqti...p.13; cf. also Ihyā'...i,p.93.

(ifrāt); and both of them are far from wisdom and caution. But the essential purpose in the dogma of faith is adherence to moderation and the following of the rightful path; since both the extremes are abhorrent. And how can enlightenment prevail amongst those who are content with following the Traditions while denying the methods of speculation and ignoring the fact that the truth of the prophet is proved by reason.¹

Al-Ghazālī further states that the traditional proofs may be conclusive and positive in their transmission (sanad) and text (matn) and show that what is proved by them must be believed. Where doubt and suspicion about the text or transmission of these occur, then what is proved by them must not be believed. Secondly, the words of the traditional proofs must be interpreted because it is not reasonable to assume that a traditional proof embodies propositions that are opposed to the verdict of reason. Thirdly, when propositions can be known by both the evidence of reason and revelation, it is imperative to believe in them.² Thus, al-Ghazālī in matters of faith and the doctrine of the origination of the world relied mainly on text of the Qur'ān and the Traditions; but he made full use of reason and logic in support of his arguments and beliefs.

¹Iqti...p.2.

²Ibid. pp.94-95.

Al-Ghazali's Methodology to prove the Origination of the World

Al-Ghazālī confines himself to three methods to prove the origination of the world, which he probably regarded as the most important bases of his proofs. They are:

1. The first is the method of Enumeration and Division (as sabr wa-t taqṣīm).¹ According to this method, al-Ghazālī classifies a proposition as being of only two alternatives, and he then proceeds to invalidate one of these alternatives, thereby proving the other alternative. An example of such a proposition in syllogistic form is that:

"The world is either a thing-originated or a thing eternal.
It is impossible for it to be eternal.
Therefore the world is a thing originated."¹

2. The second method is also in the form of syllogism:

"All that is not free from the originated-changes (al-hawādith) is originated.
The world is not free from the originated-changes.
Therefore the world is originated."²

3. The third method is to assert the impossibility of the opponent's claim. Al-Ghazālī says:

The eternity of the world is impossible as it leads to the affirmation that the spherical revolutions are infinite in number, and consist of innumerable units. But we know that this is impossible. The fact is that these revolutions can be divided into one-sixth, or

¹Ibid.p.9; cf. also Mi^cyār. pp.88-89. This method was already used by al-Juwaynī but in a different form, cf. Irshād.p.11; cf. also Muslim Intellectual.pp.121-22.

²Iqti....p.9.

one-fourth, or a half.

In other words, they have among them a definite proportion~~and~~ and a well calculated number. To put it in a syllogistic form would be:

"The revolutions of the celestial sphere have no end;
 Whatever has no end, has no beginning;
 Therefore, the world has no beginning."

But al-Ghazālī says: "it is evident that this claim of the opponent is impossible, for the revolutions of the sphere have a definite number."¹

Al-Ghazālī further proceeds to support and strengthen these methods by elucidating the differences and variations that may exist between some of them, from the point of view of the benefit derived therefrom by speculative analogy and also from the point of view of the cogent force that they may hold in inducing conviction. He demonstrates how we inevitably arrive at the final conclusion if the opponent concedes the assumed premises. What would happen, however, if the opponent were to refuse to concede all these premises of the proof or some of them? To meet such an eventuality, al-Ghazali analyses and classifies the propositions used for demonstrating evidence into self-evident and non-controversial propositions conceded by

¹Ibid.p.10.

everyone. These, he maintains, should form the basis of the proof, and the introductory premises should thus rest upon them, either directly or by means of another line of reasoning. These premises, which are in their nature axiomatic, fall into six categories. They are:

1. Premises based upon the judgment of the senses
(al-hissiyyāt)

By this al-Ghazālī means things perceived and trusted by the outward and inward vision and realization. If we say:

"Every originated-thing has a cause (sabab).

The world is an originated-thing.

Therefore the world has a cause." ¹

The truth of the major premise can be ascertained by our senses; because we perceive and ascertain by our senses the existence and origination of human beings, animals, vegetation, clouds and rain; and also the movement of these things. We also perceive and ascertain by ~~our~~ inward realization the origination of the spiritual phenomena like joy and pain. In these circumstances the opponent cannot fail to concede this a priori major premise. The minor premise he proves by another

¹Ibid.p.11.

syllogism:

"Everything not-without-originated-things is originated.

Every body is not-without-originated-things.

Therefore every body is originated."

2. Premises based upon Reason (^caql)

If we say that "the world is either eternal or originated"; then every reasonable person must concede the fact that the world is an originated-thing. We arrive at such a conclusion in the following manner:

"What does not precede originated-things is originated.

Substances do not precede any originated-thing.

Therefore the World (the totality of substances and accidents) is originated."¹

The first proposition is an intellectual one, and no reasonable (rational) person can fail to concede it; because everything which does not precede originated-things can either come into existence at the same time as these originated-things, or at a later time. There can be no other alternative; and if the opponent allege such an alternative, he would be in direct opposition to the thing that reason makes self-evident.

¹Ibid. pp.11-12.

3. Premises supported by widely-transmitted Traditions (at-tawātur)

An example of this kind would be to say:

- (a) The prophet Muhammad is truthful because the divine miracle is an evidence of his truthfulness; and
- (b) The person who has a divine miracle as an evidence of his truthfulness is indeed truthful.

The opponent cannot deny the existence of the divine miracle, because this fact is substantiated by the traditions reported to us by successive witnesses, and because knowledge of it is derived and ascertained in the same manner as knowledge of the existence of Moses, Jesus, and all other prophets of old.¹

4. Premises verified by other Means

These premises are based upon either "sensual", "mental", or "traditional" evidence. Al-Ghazālī says that after we substantiate, by the use of any of these methods of proof, the fact that the world is an originated-thing, the origination of the world (hudūth al-^cālam) would become a given premise which can then be drawn upon for the purpose of proof and be regarded as having the strength equal to that of the sensual or intellectual premises.²

¹Ibid. p.12.

²Ibid.

5. Premises based upon the Sam^ciyyāt - the Qur'ān, and Sunna

An example of this would be to say that: "Sin occurs by the will of God, for we say that all that happens in the world is by the will of God."¹ If we want to substantiate the proposition that sin occurs in the world, it would be substantiated, for the Traditions support that everything happens by the will of God. The opponent cannot deny the statement if he admits the validity of revelation.

6. Premises derived from the Beliefs held by the Opponent and the admission made by him

Such premises, although not amenable to direct substantiation by cogent proofs and also not verified by either sensual or intellectual evidence, may nevertheless be made use of if admitted by an opponent. They can then be used as premises in our proof, and the opponent cannot deny them except at the risk of vitiating the whole of his argument or doctrine.

These various kinds of axiomatic premises vary in their power to induce conviction, and also in the scope in

¹Ibid; cf. Qur. 3:26,29.

which they can be made use of, for the purpose of proof. The first and second categories are general and carry conviction in the eyes of all people, excepting of course those who have no intellect or trustworthy senses. The third is considered to be acceptable only to those who have accepted the truth of the report of the Traditions. The fourth category is considered convincing only to those who are familiar with the method of analogy and who appreciate the essential pre-requisites for the operation of this method in a way that will make it possible to draw upon it for the purpose of providing a consistent argument leading to a valid conclusion. The fifth category can convince only those who accept the validity of the Samā^cī and its authenticity. The sixth category of premises does not convince the investigator himself, but is helpful to convince the opponent, by the use of arguments in which he believes.

Meanings of Al-Hudūth, Al-^cālam, and other Cognate Words

Before giving al-Ghazālī's proofs of the origination of the world, the meanings of the words al-hudūth, al-^cālam, khalāqa, and other cognate words should be understood, to ascertain his attitude with regard to their meanings.

Al-Hudūth

The general meaning of the verb hadatha is "happened" or "was found". It means also that which "came into existence; began to be; had a beginning; began or originated; existed newly for the first time, not having been before."¹ Al-hādith is an event, an accident, which is likely to happen from nothingness. The opposite of the verb hadatha is qaduma. The opposite of al-hūduth is al-qidam, and of al-hādith is al-qadīm.

According to the philosophers, the specialized meaning of hudūth is only the determination of the existence^{ts} from pure potentiality to actuality. They believe that the world is eternal. The existence^{ts} do not spring from nothing; matter and time preceded them. They say that there is an eternal matter. It has no form, and bears within itself the potentiality of being. The prime mover² moves the potential matter to actual form.

But in the opinion of the "ancient" (as-salaf) as well as the "later" (al-khalaf) Muslim scholars, hudūth means that which originated from non-existence. The Mutakallimūn believed that origination is one of the acts

¹Lane's Lexi...I,ii,p.527; & also Lisān. art. 'ahdatha',ii,pp.436-37.

²Cf. Ch.II,p.63; & also Ishrā...ii,pp.97-104; iii,pp.499-507.

of God. It means the origination of the world out of absolute non-existence.¹ Al-Ghazālī is in agreement with the ancient as well as the later Muslim scholars' viewpoint that existence did not spring from a pre-existing matter, but was brought out of nothingness. He says that hudūth means the origination of things which have no existence before, and that existent or originated thing in itself had not that existence in itself for all times as different from this or that time.² Al-Ghazālī outrightly rejects the idea of the existence of any matter in whatever form it may be. According to him, matter had neither the potentiality nor the power and the possibility of any existence whatsoever before its origination by God. He says that eternal is that which never ceases to exist, and whose existence has no origin. It has no cilla (cause) and that alone is God.³

Al-^cālam

The word al-^cālam in the ordinary sense denotes the creatures of God. It is whatever exists. It also

¹Cf. Irsh...p.10 (Luci).

²Mi^cyār.p.167.

³Ibid.

means "what the cavity of the celestial sphere comprises."¹
 According to the ancient scholars it means "everything that exists other than God." The later scholars define "the world as consisting of substances (al-jawāhir) and accidents (al-a^crād)."² Al-Ghazālī uses both the definitions given by the ancients as well as by the later scholars. He says: "al-^cālam means the collection of all the simple physical bodies and all the homogeneous existences";³ or "by the 'worlds (or spheres)' we simply mean 'classes of existents'."⁴
 In al-Iqtisād al-Ghazālī says: "by al-^cālam we mean every existent thing other than God", and he further says that "by every existent thing other than God we mean all bodies and their accidents."⁵

These two definitions of al-^cālam are not contrary. Everything that exists other than God is what implies a prior non-existence. It has a beginning. It is originated. Al-Ghazālī mentions two existents:

(i) God, who has no beginning; in Him alone is the coincidence of existence (wujūd) and essence (dhāt).⁶

¹Lane's Lexi...I,v,2141.

²Irsh...p.10; cf. also Usūl.p.33.

³Mi^cyār. p.172.

⁴The Faith & Practice. p.63.

⁵Iqti...p.13.

⁶Ihyā'.i,p.93.

He says:

God is the one whose essence and attributes are independent of all existing things, whereas everything in existence is dependent upon (in need of) Him. Everything derives its existence from Him.¹

(ii) The other existents^t, which he says:

In all other existents^{ts} there is a separation between the existence and essence. These existents have a beginning, and an end. They are originated and observation gives enough evidence of their origination and changes.²

Khalaqa ✓

Khalaqa in the ordinary sense means 'to cut according to some measure'. It also means to create something in accordance with some plan. It has been discussed in the first chapter and here it is more fitting to confine this term to what al-Ghazālī means by it. He says:

Khalaqa is a common term, which may be used in the meaning of bringing or creation of existence, however it may be; or one may say the creation of existence which proceeds from matter and form, however it may be; one may say khalaqa in the second meaning but different in the sense that the creation is in the

¹Maqṣad.p.28; & also Iqtī...p.13.

²Iqtī...p.13

meaning of invention (ikhtirā^c) without there previously having been matter, in which is the power and possibility of existence.¹

Al-Ghazālī uses the term khalāqa in this last sense, that is to say the creation of the world is an act of origination, by God, of matter as well as form, out of absolute non-existence. In the technical sense, al-Ghazālī uses khalāqa to mean the same as ahdatha, in accordance with the divine decree and plan.²

Ibdā^c or Bada^c

Another word which al-Ghazālī uses in connection with the creation is ibdā^c. He says it is used in two meanings:

Firstly, it means establishing something not from pre-existing matter and not by means of anything; and secondly, it means that a thing has existence without a cause and without any intermediary though it is possible for it in its essence not to exist, and in this case it has lost completely what it has in its essence.³

Ibdā^c means to bring something into existence that which has not existed before, and without any means.

¹Mi^cyār.p.167.

²Maqsad.p.33.

³Mi^cyār.p.167.

It means that which originated for the first time, not after the example of anything preceding. Al-Ghazālī interpreting the word badī^c says that it means the one who originates something for the first time when such an action has no precedent in terms of an act similar to it. He says, "Al-Badī^c, as the name of God, means the originator of all existents, with no pre-existing model."¹ It further signifies that every existent (which has come into existence) after Him, results from His producing it and so is in no way analogous to its producer. Al-Ghazālī further illustrates the various aspects of creation - as its emergence, organization and composition of forms - according to the best ordinances, while discussing the most beautiful names of God.

Different Aspects of Creation

Al-Ghazālī says that everything which emerges from non-existence to existence, or the act of creation and origination, requires planning. In order to simplify^p al-Ghazālī

¹Maqṣad. pp.71,63; cf.also Qur. 2:117; 6:101.

distinguishes the different aspects of creation. His analysis refers to the three aspects that connote the passage from non-being to being:

(i) The first is in accordance with the divine plan (at-taqdīr);

(ii) secondly, the production and bringing of things into existence (al-ījād ^calā wafq at-taqdīr); and

(iii) finally, the formation and development of it after production (taswīr ba'd al-ījād).

He says:

God Most High is the Creator (Al-khāliq) in as much as He is the One who plans and pre-determines, in accordance with the Divine decree (qadar); He is the Originator (Al-Bārī') who produces and brings into existence all; and He is the One who Forms (Al-Musawwir) the existents, and arranges them in the best possible manner.

Al-Ghazālī illustrates this by saying that these aspects of creation remind one of a building which requires a planner to estimate accurately what is needed in terms of timber, bricks, and land area (not to mention of the number of buildings plus their length and width). To sketch and fashion is the work of an architect; following this a builder is required who will assume the responsibility for

¹Maqṣad. pp.33-36.

the work by which the building should actually come into existence. The next step requires a decorator to improve upon its appearance. This is the usual procedure in respect of planning, production, and formation of anything. However, this is not the case with Almighty God. He Himself is the Planner and Creator, the Producer, and the Decorator. Al-Ghazālī further explains this by giving an example of God's work in man, one of His creatures. Various things are required in respect of his existence and formation. First of all, the substance from which his existence is to be derived, must be obtained. This is, of course, a body endowed with special characteristics. Further man's physical constitution cannot be sound without the combination of water and earth. But earth alone is rigid and cannot be moulded in such a way as to make movement possible. Water, too, is absolute liquid; it does not hold together, nor can it have a firm shape. So the dry and the wet are to be blended in such a way that they keep the balance. The result is the clay. At this point heat must be applied so that the mixture might solidify. Again, man requires an accurate estimate of the particular amount of both water and earth to be used. If the amount is too little, man's physical constitution would not emerge, ,

and if it is too much, that would be a ^{mere} mass. What is required is the exact amount, neither too much nor too little, and that exact amount is known only to God. This fact, of course, is important to the planning. Thus, in respect of the planning and the creation of all things, in accordance with pre-determination, says al-Ghazālī, God is the Creator. In respect of the production and bringing forth of all existence, He is the Producer. He is the Fashioner, since He arranges the shapes of things in the best possible order and gives them the best possible form. Its real nature is known only to the one who knows and understands the construction and the form of the world in general as well as in details.

The most important point which al-Ghazali wants to stress is that God is not only the 'Giver of forms', but also is the Originator and the Creator of every existent. He creates things out of absolute nothingness, and further develops and sustains them. Here al-Ghazālī wants to rule out the possibility of any potential matter in which lies the power and possibility of existence whatsoever. To prove that the world is created and originated by God, al-Ghazālī says that human nature itself seems to testify it. He quotes from the Qur'ān: "Is there any doubt

regarding God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?"¹
 The Qur'ān further affirms that this conception is innate in the minds of human beings as the Qur'ān says: "If you ask them, who created the heavens and the earth?, they will say, God."² There is then, according to al-Ghazālī, enough evidence in the nature of man and in the testimony of the Qur'ān to prove that God is the Originator and the Creator of every existent thing.

Al-Ghazālī's Proofs for the Existence of God and the Origination of the world

1. The Proofs of Origination

Al-Ghazālī starts with the fundamental belief that God exists alone and that there was nothing with Him. He then proceeds to argue that everything that exists other than God requires to be originated in order to acquire existence. He supports his claim on the premises based upon both the judgment of the senses and reason. He says that it is self-evident to the senses and reason that there must be a cause for the origination of everything originated. Since the world is originated it follows that there was a

¹Ihyā'.i,p.93; cf. Qur.14:10.

²Ihyā'.i,p.93; cf. Qur.31:25.

cause for its origination. The most succinct statement of this argument is in al-Iqtisād. The syllogism runs as:

"Every originated thing has a cause.
The world is an originated thing.
Therefore the world has a cause."¹

Al-Ghazālī says: ~~that~~

"Of everything there is a cause, and the world is an originated thing, so it necessarily has a cause. And we mean by the world every existent thing other than God, and by every existent thing other than God we mean all bodies and their accidents. Its detailed explanation is that we have no doubt in the origin of the existence, since we know that every existent either occupies space or not (mutahayyiz wa ghayr mutahayyiz). And if every existent which occupies space is not united (i'tilāf) with its body we call it an indivisible substance (al-jawhar al-fard), and if it is united with another we call it a body; and that which does not occupy a place will either necessitate for its existence a body in which it subsists, and we call it an accident (al-^carad), or that which does not require anything for its existence, that is God. As for the bodies and their accidents, they are known by observation and no attention should be paid to the opponent who disputes about the accidents, as they are self-evident. If his arguments and disputations were not existent how could we busy ourself in answering and listening to his arguments? If they were existent, it is inevitable that they are something other than his (arguer's) body,

¹Iqti...pp.13-14.

since his body was existent before and his arguments were not. Thus, you have known that bodies and accidents are perceived by observation. But the existent which is neither a body, nor a located substance, and which has no accident in it, cannot be so perceived (known by sensations), and we claim that that existent is prior to everything, and that the world exists because of his power (that is God). And we understand this by proof and not by sensation.¹

Al-Ghazālī goes on to verify the argument of his claim. He says if the opponent disputes that everything originated has a cause and questions, how did he know that? The answer will be that this question can be asked concerning that existence which is originated, and not concerning that existence which never ceases to exist. He who does not understand what is meant by the term 'originated-thing' and 'cause' is either ignorant, and there is no need to answer his questions; or if he understands them, then his reason would necessarily accept that there is a cause for everything originated. "By originated-thing, we mean, what was non-existent and came into existence."²

With the origination of the world as a premise, al-Ghazālī proceeds to prove that the world being originated

¹Ibid; cf. Irsh.pp.10,12-13; and also Tamhīd.p.45. Here al-Ghazālī followed the same line as undertook by al-Juwaynī to prove the origination of the world.

²Iqti...p.14.

must necessarily have a cause, by recourse to the so-called 'principle of determination'. In its barest form, this principle meant that since prior to the existence of the world it was equally possible for it to be or not to be, a 'determinant', whereby the possibility of existence could prevail over possibility of non-existence, was required; and this 'determinant', he argued, was God.

2. Proof from Contingency

Al-Ghazālī says that existence before its origination must have been either 'possible'; or 'impossible'; or 'necessary'.¹ Necessity and possibility in existence is a philosophical idea as already mentioned by al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Al-Fārābī says that there are two kinds of existents: the possible and the necessary. If the possible is supposed to be non-existent, this is not logically absurd. If it happens, it happens as a result of something. It needs a cause and there cannot be an infinite series of causes. It should always need a necessary existent, which is the First existent. As to the necessary existent, it is absolutely absurd to suppose its non-existence. It has

¹Ibid; cf. Irsh...pp.16-17.

no cause. It never happens as a result of something other than itself. It is the first cause of all things. Its existence should be previous to all other existents. It is the most perfect of all existents, and beyond causes.¹

Avicenna also defines the necessary and the possible.

He says that the necessary does not need a cause; whereas² the possible needs a cause.

Al-Ghazālī uses these concepts of the opponents to prove the origination of the world in his own way. He states that it is wrong to say that existent was impossible; for that which is impossible in itself, never exists at all. Again, it is not necessary in itself, for that which necessary in itself is never deprived of existence. It follows that it must have been possible in itself. To prove his argument, al-Ghazālī, points out that the world is composed of bodies, with various forms, having accidents which have distinguishing characteristics as colour, shape, and other qualities. He then tries to ascertain their variability, and from this deduces the meaning of the possibility of things. One finds that things have an unstable nature (this is perceptible by the senses as well as by the mind). One can

¹ 'Uyūm al-Masā'il.p.57.

² Naj...p.366; cf.also Shifā'.p.299.

perceive the sequence of the accidents and can assert that things might always be of another shape than they are. Thus, all existents are unstable. This leads to the conclusion that they are possible. And its possible existence originates - against its continued non-existence, which is equally possible - then the mind posits intuitively and without recourse to rational proof that there must be a cause to bring it into existence from non-existence.

Al-Ghazālī says:

The existence of the world is possible and we mean by this statement is that it may exist or not. It was not in existence before, because its existence was not necessary; but, rather, its existence needs a 'determinant' so that its non-existence may be changed into existence. And by cause, we mean, nothing but the 'determinant'.¹

What al-Ghazālī means by the determinant and its relation to creation will be stated later on. Having proved the contingent nature of the world, he further goes on to prove its origination on the basis of movement and rest.

3. Proofs from Changes (hawādith) and Movement and Rest

Again, al-Ghazālī tries to prove the origination of

¹Iqti...p.14.

the world in a syllogistic way by shifting the argument that by the world he means nothing but all bodies and substances.

He says:

"All that is not-free from originated-changes (hawādith) is originated.

All bodies are not-free from originated-changes.
Therefore all bodies are originated." ¹

Al-Ghazālī asks the opponent which of the two premises he disputes? If the opponent asks why it is said that every located body is not-free from changes, the reply would be that it is not-free from movement and rest, and both are originated. If he questions again why their existence is claimed first and then their origination, al-Ghazālī says that the answer to this question has been elaborated in kalām and needs no further explanation. For no rational man can ever doubt the existence of accidents in himself such as pain, hunger, thirst, and other conditions nor in their origination, as these characteristics are perceptible. Similarly, if one observes the bodies of the world, one cannot doubt the change of their conditions, and that these changes are originated.

Al-Ghazālī further proves that movement and rest are originated by their alternate occurrence, as is observable

¹Ibid.

in all material objects, those that can be seen as well as those that are invisible. For there can be nothing at rest which reason does not decide to be capable of coming to a stand-still. Of the two states of rest and movement that which happens to occur at a time (t̄ari') is originated, because it did occur. The previous state, of an object whether at rest or in motion, is also originated, for were its eternity proved, its non-existence would be impossible.¹ Again, if it is said: how did you know that it is originated, for it might be hidden and then appeared? Its reply would be rather to say that substance has either hidden movement in it or apparent and they are originated, for it has been proved that it is not free from changes. The proof involved in this statement of al-Ghazālī is that by the world he means the bodies and the substances, and they are either at rest or in movement, and whatever is at rest or in movement is originated. This statement is self-evident, for he who conceives a body which is neither at rest nor in movement is both obstinately ignorant and unwilling to follow the path of reason. Al-Ghazālī further states that those who dispute the origination of the world are the philosophers. He says:

¹Ibid.p.16; cf.also Ihyā'.i,p.95.

They declared that the bodies of the world are divided into heavens and the four elements. The heavens are in continuous movement. And the individuals of their movements are originated, but they are continuously successive, eternally and everlastingly. And the four elements, which the cavity of the heaven of the moon encompasses, are common to a matter containing its forms and accidents. And that matter is eternal, but the forms and the accidents are originated and follow each other successively from eternity. Water by heat changes into vapour and vapour changes by heat into fire and so with the rest of the elements; and these elements mingle with each other and originate new mixtures, and from these mixtures the minerals, plants, and animals come into existence. These elements are not separate from these originated forms, and the heavens are never separated from the originated movements.¹

The philosophers believe that no one of the bodies in the world originates, nor does it perish. It is only the forms and accidents which originate. The bodies - that is, the heavens - are eternal; and the four elements, which are the stuff of the sphere of the moon, and their bodies and matter are eternal. On these pass in succession the forms resulting from combination and transformation. Further, the minerals, plants, and the animal soul originate in time. And the series of the causes of all those which

¹Iqti...pp.14-15; cf.Maqa...220-25; cf.also Fārā Tx.pp.58-60; Naj...p.299; Isha...pp.277,661.

which originate come to an end at the circular motion. And the circular motion is eternal, its source being the eternal soul of the sphere. All this shows that the world has no origination. Al-Ghazālī says that if these bodies are supposed to be necessary, it will be absurd. If they are supposed to be possible, all that is possible needs a cause and is originated. Since all the philosophers have agreed that the bodies of the world are not free from originated-things (as they admit the origination of the forms and accidents), nevertheless, they have denied the origination of the world. If it is said, as the philosophers state that everything is not free from originated-things, then it should be originated. The proof is that were it not so, it would be necessary to assume the existence before everything originated of another so originated, and so on ad infinitum, so that unless all these originated-things did come and pass, the turn of the one in question would never come. But this¹ is impossible because there is no end to infinity.

¹Iqti...pp.16-17; cf.also Ihyā'.i,p.94.

4. Proof from the Revolutions

Al-Ghazali's other proof is from the revolutions of the celestial spheres. Were these revolutions infinite, their number would either be odd or even, or both odd and even, or neither odd nor even. But it is impossible that the number could be both odd and even, or neither odd nor even, for this would combine the positive with the negative, so that affirmation of the one would involve the negation of the other, and vice versa. Further, it is impossible for the number of the revolution to be even only, since even becomes odd by the addition of one to it - and look how the infinite stands in need of one! It is impossible to be odd only since odd becomes even by the addition of one - and here again the infinite is proved to be in need of one! Finally, it is impossible for the number to be neither odd nor even, for this would mean that it is finite.¹

Here al-Ghazālī, again, derives the premise from the belief held by the opponent and the admission made by him. By involving the opponent in the choice between two equally unfavourable alternatives, he gets his conclusion. He further proves that the celestial

¹Iqti...pp.16-17.

revolutions have a well calculated and a definite number.

For instance, he says:

The sphere of the Sun completes one revolution in one year, while that of Saturn makes one in thirty years. Therefore, the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of those of the Sun. And the revolutions of the Jupiter are one-twelfth of those of the Sun, for ¹ Jupiter completes one revolution in twelve years.

This argument leads to the affirmation that the revolutions of the sphere are finite and consist of a definite number, and so they are originated.

Proofs of the Existence of God

Having established that the world is possible and originated, al-Ghazālī proceeds to argue that the possible cannot exist by itself. He now sets forth the more popular proof from origination, which is known as dalīl al-jawāz.² He repeats that if the world is possible, it must need a cause to bring it into existence. Hence the next claim is that the cause of all possible existents or the bodies of the world is eternal, that there is no

¹Ibid. pp. 17-18.

²Cf. Irsh. p. 16, where al-Juwaynī develops the similar argument from temporality.

beginning of its existence. It should be the originator of everything, and that it has existed before everything, and He is God. Here is the proof: Were He Himself originated and not eternal, His own coming into existence would have required an originator, and his originator another and so on ad infinitum, without ultimately leading to one pre-existent, first originator who is the object and whom we call the Originator of the world. So al-Ghazālī says that we should stop at the eternal cause and this is what we are aiming at and call it the Originator of the world. It is evidently necessary to declare it Eternal, and by 'eternal' he means nothing but that which is not preceded by non-existence, that is the statement of existence and denial of preceding non-existence.¹

The next claim is that the Creator of the world is eternal without a beginning and everlasting without an end. For according to revelation 'He is the First and the Last'.² Here is a point which one should know, that that which is first is first in relation to something and that which is last is last in relation to something.

¹Iqti...p.18; cf. Ihyā'.i,p.94.

²Ihyā'.i,p.94; & also Maqṣad.p.65; cf. Qur.57:3.

These terms are relative and moreover they are opposite. It is inconceivable that one thing can both be first and last in the same respect and related to the same thing. Rather when one observes the order of existence as such, and also observes the chain of the ordered existents, then one must know that God Most High is the First in relation to them, since each and every existent acquires its existence from Him. As for God Himself, He exists by means of His own essence, and He has not derived His existence from another. At the same time, no matter how much one considers the order or progression and the gradation of those which are moving, one must conclude that He is the Last. He is the Last in relation to the progression and the First in relation to existence.¹ According to reason it is impossible to imagine the non-existence of that which has been shown to be eternal. Here is the proof: if the possibility of its non-existence is assumed, then this could be self-imposed or through the action of an opponent. But were it possible for a thing (whose existence is conceivable) to be annihilated by itself, it would be possible for a thing (whose non-existence is inconceivable) to come into existence by itself.² Thus, the occurrence

¹Maqsad.p.65.

²Iqti...p.19.

of existence, like the occurrence of annihilation, requires a cause. But it is absurd and unimaginable to assume His annihilation through an opponent, for that would require the assumption of the latter's being pre-existent or co-existent with Him. How, then, is it possible to conceive of an opponent with Him in pre-existence, when God's existence and eternity has been proved. It is also impossible for the opponent to be himself originated, since it is ^{less} ~~more~~ likely for the originated to succeed in its opposition to the eternal with a view to its destruction than it is for the eternal in its opposition to the originated with a view to preventing its coming into existence. For prevention is indeed easier than destruction, and eternal is stronger than and superior to the originated.¹

Al-Ghazālī further builds up his proofs of the existence of God on the basis that He is neither a substance, nor a body, nor an accident, and that He is One. He starts with substance, body and accident, and the movement and immobility resulting from the transference of a substance from one place to another, and to its stabilization therein, and goes step by step to prove the need for an originator

¹Ibid. pp. 19-20; cf. Ihyā'. i, p. 94.

both existent and eternal, and in doing so he argues for the proposition that "what has no beginning can have no end."¹

Al-Ghazālī argues in much the same way as the Ash^carites, but he differs from them in the fact that often in the course of his argumentation he formulates possible objections to his contentions. It seems that he was strongly affected by his drawn-out controversy with the philosophers on the subject of their belief in the eternity of the world.

The fourth claim which al-Ghazālī brings forth is: that God is not a substance which occupies space and that He is too exalted to have any relation to space. Here is the proof: Every substance which occupies a space is conditioned by this space, and is either at rest in that space or in movement away from it, that is, it is subject to movement and rest which are originated. But if it were possible to imagine the existence of an eternal substance which is limited by space, then the eternity of all substances in the world would be conceivable, which is impossible, for what is subject to changes is proved to be originated. If someone uses the term 'substance' with

¹Iqti...pp.19-20.

reference to God, without intending to mean substance which is limited by space, he would be verbally wrong but not in the meaning.¹

The next claim is:

God is not a body. Its proof is this: A body is composed of substance. But since it has been disproved that He was a substance limited by space, He cannot be a body, since every body is limited by space and is composed of substances, and since it is also impossible to dissociate substance from composition (ijtimā^c) and decomposition (iftirāq), movement (ḥaraka) and rest (sukūn), form (ḥay'a) and quantity (miqdār), all of which are the characteristics of originated things, so it is impossible for the originated to be its own originator, or the created to be its creator.²

Again, al-Ghazālī says:

God is not an accident inherent in a body nor settled in a location. For body is subject to accident and is necessarily originated, and its originator would exist before it. It is not possible then that He could be incarnated (ḥallan) in a body when He existed from all eternity alone, with none beside Him, and then created all substances and accidents afterwards.³

Al-Ghazali further asserts that He is all-knowing (ʿalīm), all-powerful (qādir), all-willing (murīd), and

¹Ibid.p.20; cf.Iḥyā'.i,pp.94-95.

²Iqti...pp.20-21; cf.Iḥyā'.i,p.95.

³Iqti...pp.22-23; cf.Iḥyā'.i,pp.95-96.

creator (khāliq), and these attributes are impossible for accidents to possess. Nay, they are inconceivable except¹ for a being (maujūd) who is self-existent and self-dependent.

Further Proof

Al-Ghazālī goes on further to prove the creation of the world with the Oneness of God as a premise. He ascribes to it two meanings:

(i) That God is indivisible, for He has no quantity and what has no quantity cannot be divided.

(ii) That God has no equal in degree and no opposite, as already mentioned.

That God has no opposite is evident since the opposite of a thing is that which alternates with it in the occupation of a place, and never shares it; whereas God is not limited by space, and therefore, can have no opposite. What is meant by the peerlessness (lā nidda lahu fī rutbatihī)² of God is that no being created by God can equal Him. In proving this proposition al-Ghazālī makes use of burhān at-tamānu³. But he draws his argument from the degrees of existence and excellence, instead of conflicts of wills.

¹Iqtī...pp.23-25.

²Ibid.p.35.

³Ibid.pp.35-36; cf.Irsh.pp.30-34.

If God has an associate, then this associate must be one of these: (a) either equal to God in degree; or (b) of higher degree than Him; or (c) of lower degree. Each of these alternatives can be shown to be absurd. In the first case, duality implies variation; this variation may be in the nature (movement and colour, for example, are two different natures, although they may exist in the same place and at the same time), or it may be a variation in place or time, the nature being the same (an illustration of this would be two blacknesses which cannot reside in one substance at one time). Now if God's associate is His equal in every way, his existence becomes impossible, for they cannot differ in nature since they are both pre-supposed to be eternal, and they cannot differ in time or place since they are not bounded by time or place. Therefore, there can be no variation and no duality either, and the unity of God is established. The second and third alternatives are equally absurd, for God is ex hypothesi the highest Being in existence; in either of the two cases therefore the higher form is God and the other is not God.¹ Al-Ghazālī then attacks the theory that there might be two gods, dividing between them

¹Iqti...p.36.

the creation of the world, the dividing line being between the heavens and the earth, or animate and inanimate, or good and evil. He reduces this theory to two alternatives: either (a) the dividing line cuts through both substances and accidents, each of the gods creating some of the substances and some of the accidents; or (b) one of them creates all the substances and the other all the accidents. He then disproves both the alternatives by taking another hypothesis that one god may create solely good and the other solely evil. "This amounts to folly", he writes of the hypothesis, "for evil is not evil in its essence; indeed in its essence it is equal and similar to good, and he who has the power to create one thing has the power to create its similitude."¹ Al-Ghazālī concludes his argument with the assertion that the multiplicity of gods in any form would result in confusion, and he quotes from the Qur'ān: "If there were in them other gods than Allāh, their order would have been disrupted."²

Al-Ghazālī's ^{conclusion} ~~investigation~~, so far, is that God exists and is self-existent. He is neither a substance nor a body and an accident, while the whole world is made up of these. All bodies and accidents are originated

¹Ibid. pp. 36-37.

²Ibid. p. 38; cf. Qur. 21:22.

and created by Him. Hence it is impossible for the created to resemble its creator. The world is not of the nature of the effect which always co-existed with God. It is originated out of non-existence. The world in its totality is possible, and God is the cause of its existence. Now a number of questions arise: If the world is originated it must then inevitably be at a specific moment of time, and for what reason is that moment particularized to the exclusion of all others? What is the nature of the cause and its relation to the originated? Al-Ghazali is obliged to answer all such questions.

Meaning of Determinant and its Relation to Creation

Al-Ghazālī says that the existence and the non-existence of this originated world are possible. If its possible existence ^{comes into existence,} ~~originates~~, there must be a cause to bring it into existence. By the cause, he means, the 'determinant'. The question is if the 'determinant' was and the world was not; when later on the world emerged, who is the originator of the determinant itself? Why does it originate now, and not before? In analysing the 'determinant', al-Ghazālī considers two alternatives:

(a) Either it is a natural determinant or agent; or

(b) it is a free agent (fā'il mukhtār).

Al-Ghazālī disproves that ~~he~~^{it} is a natural agent, and concludes that the determinant is 'all-powerful' (qādir) and 'all-willing' (murīd), or in other words He is a free agent. He says:

The Originator of the world is all-powerful and all-willing as regards His actions (murīdun li 'af'ālihi). He brings about the world according to His power and will. If the determinant or God could not exercise his power and will, he would not have been able to create the world in this particular place, and at a particular time. As to the world, all spaces and all instants of time are similar. The Originator originated it in a space and time that best suited His power and will. He chooses the time and space as He wills.¹

Thus, according to al-Ghazālī, the determinant is a free one who creates and originates through His will and power. Affirming the attributes of power, he says, that it is the attribute by which action becomes possible. Among its special characteristics is that it is related to all things possible, and ^{as} these are infinite there is no limit to the power of God. To prove the prevalence of God's power, al-Ghazālī relies on two propositions already

¹Iqti...pp.38,47; cf.Ihyā'.i,p.96.

proved: That God exists; and that the Creator of the world is one. From these premises only two possible alternatives can follow: either God has as many powers as there are objects of power (these are infinite), and this alternative is absurd since it has been established that the revolutions of the sphere cannot be infinite; or else He has a unified power over all substances and accidents, which differ among themselves but have one thing common, that is possibility. Therefore, everything that is possible is subject to God's power and is actualized by His power.¹

To establish the prevalence of God's power gives rise to a number of questions, like the creation of man's acts and its relation to the power of God; these will be reviewed later on. At this point the relevant reference is only to answer the question: Can things unknown be the object of God's power? Before answering this question, al-Ghazālī affirms that anything possible is an object of power and anything impossible is not. He then explains the meaning of "impossible" and "possible" in order to determine whether a thing unknown is possible and therefore an object of power, or impossible and therefore not so. Thus he makes out that, viewed from different aspects, the

¹Iqti...p.39.

world may rightly be said to be "necessary", "impossible", or "possible".

(i) If the will exists, and wills it to exist, then it is necessary;

(ii) if there is no will willing it to exist, then it is impossible; and

(iii) if the will for its existence or non-existence is left out of consideration, then it is possible, that is possible in itself.

It is therefore imaginable that the same thing may be possible and impossible at the same time, but only in the sense that it may be possible in itself and impossible in respect of something else. It cannot be at the same time possible in itself and impossible in itself, for the two terms are contradictory. What is meant by impossible in itself is what is precluded by the essence, such as the co-existence of the two opposites - like blackness and non-blackness - in the same substance.

Now, if it is foreknown to God, for example, that Zayd is to die on Saturday morning, then the creation of life for him at the same time is possible in itself, but impossible if it is considered that something outside it, that is knowledge, is connected with his death. Thus, life has become

impossible because of something outside itself, which is knowledge, otherwise knowledge will have become ignorance. So when we say, "Zayd's life at such a time is an object of power", what is meant is that life in itself, inasmuch as it is life, is not impossible, and that God's power inasmuch as it is power is not incapable (in itself or because of some reason within it) of creating it. Therefore the negation of impotence in the essence of power, and the affirmation of possibility in the essence of life are two matters which no rational being can gainsay. So when an opponent says that what is unknown is not subject to power, meaning that its existence would lead to an impossibility, then he is true, and al-Ghazālī says his quarrel with him is not over this point but over whether it is correct to use the term in an absolute sense. This is a matter of linguistic research, and in such a case as the one above, there can be no doubt that it is correct to apply the term "potent" to God.¹

Al-Ghazālī further explains that the 'determinant' is the one who has the will for the action, who has a free choice, and who knows what he wills. Real action depends on will. Suppose an event which in order to happen,

¹Iqti...pp.40-41.

depends on two things - one volitional and the other non-volitional - here reason would attribute the action to the volitional factor. This is the will that determines that a possible thing shall be existent or non-existent. It cannot be dispensed with even where there is knowledge, because knowledge is dependent upon the thing known, related to it in its actual form, and it is no part of its function to alter or influence it. The will is involved in every act of origination because every originated thing is created by the power of God, and everything created by the power pre-supposes a will to direct power to the object of power. Thus every object of power is willed, and every originated thing is an object of power; therefore every originated thing is willed.¹ So the 'determinant' is he from whose will an action proceeds. What al-Ghazālī means by God being the determinant is that He is the cause of the existence of everything. The opponent points out that a will implies a need and act of will stands in need of another, and so on ad infinitum. Al-Ghazālī retorts that such a will which implies a need is by no means to be attributed to God. Eternal will does not resemble temporal intentions. As to the other objection, raised earlier,

¹Ibid. pp. 46-47.

al-Ghazālī says that the will of God is unconditional and unconstrained by any external will, except by the self-imposed law of contradiction. His will is free and self-initiated. It need not have a cause to act or not to act; if it needs must have a cause it is impossible to think that this cause is not external to it. Al-Ghazālī further states that it is also not necessary that God's will should produce its effect immediately; it is possible to think that His will may have a 'delayed effect', that is, the effect might appear after some period of time. Here he maintains the possibility of the eternity of God's will and the temporality and the origination of the world as the object of that will. But one thing is to be borne in mind, that the will of God is not separate from Him. Again, it is also possible to think that God eternally willed that the world should come into existence at some specific period of time. Hence, there is no violation of any logic in affirming the Sunnites' belief that the world had its origination in time.

Al-Ghazālī illustrates this point further. He says that the world is an action of God. It is the nature of an action that it must have a beginning in time. This

is inconceivable in the case of an eternal thing, for that which eternally exists cannot be produced and hence is not a product. Thus, the temporal origin is an indispensable condition for an action. Al-Ghazālī again repudiates the view that non-existence could bear a relation to God. He says that non-existence can never be related to Him, and moreover non-existence qua non-existence does not stand in need of an agent at all. The action is related to the agent by virtue of its being an originated event, not by virtue of its non-existence, which is a mental supposition only. On the contrary, it is related to the agent in the state of its temporal origination. And it is so related, because it is a temporal and originated phenomenon. If the opponent denies its temporal character, its being an action will be unintelligible, and it will bear no relation to the agent. Whereas the world is an action of God's origination, determined by His will, thus it has a beginning, and what begins, begins in time. Time originated with the origination of the world.

The Relation between the Agent and Action

Al-Ghazālī states that the principle (God) is one in all respects, while the world is composed of different

things - substances, bodies, and accidents. The world is an act of origination through His will and power. So in this way there is a relation of total dependence of the action upon its agent. What prevents one from believing that God is the omnipotent and willing agent who does what He wills and ordains as He likes, and who creates similar and dissimilar things alike, whenever and in whatever manner He likes and wills? The impossibility of such a belief is neither a self-evident truth, nor a matter of inferential knowledge. On the contrary, the prophets, whose strength lay in their miracles, have lent their authority to it. Hence it is obligatory on us to believe in them. As regards the inquiry into the manner in which the world proceeded from God's will, ^{it} is an idle and aimless venture. Here the opponent might point out that instead of giving a reply on sound rational grounds, al-Ghazālī had recourse to authority. Al-Ghazālī himself was aware of the weakness in his argument. He admitted that his answer did not completely silence his opponents, for he deemed it impossible finally to answer their objections or to do more than explain and expose their mainspring, because the subject of the investigation was the eternal attributes of God, the reality of which transcends our understanding.

He writes:

Since one must necessarily believe, and there is no possibility of belief other than in those three interpretations: 'extravagance'; 'remissness'; and 'moderation'; and since the third (that is the middle course) affirming the attributes is the likeliest, therefore, one must believe in it. If the objection leaves some traces of doubt in the heart, then these are unavoidable - and there are doubts about other points which are even greater. To explain the objections, in whole or in part, is possible, whereas the object of investigation - being the eternal attributes transcending the understanding of created beings - is beyond our grasp.¹

Thus, al-Ghazālī in the final analysis takes refuge in the articles of faith. But still he tries to explain whatever he can. Al-Ghazālī's primary conception here is 'voloo ergo sum'. He suggests two ways of knowing God and His attributes:

(i) One is by the consideration of one's self. He quotes a well-known saying of the prophet that "he who knows himself, knows his God";² and that is by contemplation of his own being and attributes, man can have some knowledge of God and His actions. When a man considers himself he

¹Iqti...pp.62-63.

²Kīmiyā-yi Sa'ādat.p.41; Ihyā'.iii,p.326; iv,p.371.

knows that there was a time when he was non-existent, as it is said in the Qur'ān: "Does it not occur to man that there was a time when he was nothing?"¹ Further, he knows that he was made out of a drop of mingled sperm in which there was neither intellect, nor hearing, sight, head, hands, feet, etc. From this it is obvious that, whatever degree of perfection he may have arrived at, he did not make himself, nor can he now make a single hair. How much more helpless, was his condition when he was a mere drop of water (semen)?² Thus, man finds in his own being reflected in miniature the power, will, and wisdom of the Creator. Here al-Ghazālī tries to prove that from his own creation man comes to know God's existence, from the wonders of his bodily constitution God's power and will. In this way the knowledge of one's self becomes a key to the knowledge of God and His attributes.

(ii) Secondly, al-Ghazālī speaks of an affinity and resemblance between God and man, on the basis that 'He breathed into man His spirit', and of man's duty to imitate God and to be characterized by the characters^{istic} of God (takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh).³ Al-Ghazālī further quotes in this connection from the sayings of the prophet that "God created man

¹Kīmiyā.p.41; cf. Qur. 76:1-2.

²Kīmiyā.p.41; cf. Qur. 22:5; 23:14.

³Maqṣad.pp.15-16; cf. Iḥyā'.iv,pp.205,251.

in His sūra." ¹ Man may be regarded as a microcosm, a universe in little, just as God is living, knowing, willing, and has power, so man is living, knowing, willing, and has power. There is some affinity since as God rules the world, so the spirit of man rules the body. But al-Ghazālī holds the position that when attributes are said to belong to God and also to man, the correspondance is only verbal. He maintains that the statement implies the assertion of a resemblance between man and God, because if man is characterized by the characters^{istic} of God then he resembles Him, yet it is known by both revelation and reason that nothing is like God, that "He does not resemble anything and nothing resembles Him." ² Al-Ghazālī says that he would reply that when one knows the meaning of the resemblance which is denied of God and knows that nothing resembles Him, then it should not be necessary for one to suppose that sharing necessitates resemblance in respect of every characteristic. Resemblance is an expression for sharing in the species and the quiddity((māhiyya)). For example, even if the horse

¹ Kīmīyā.p.45; cf. Ihyā'.iv,pp.205,251; cf. also W.M.Watt, 'Created in His Image', Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society, xviii,(1959-60). pp.38-49.

² Maqṣad.p.18; cf. Qur.42:11.

attains the ultimate degree of cleverness, it still does not resemble man because it is different from him in respect of species. It is similar to him only in respect of cleverness which is something accidental and external to the quiddity which constitutes the essence of humanity. The special property of God is that He is the Existent whose existence is necessary by virtue of His essence. No sharing in respect of this property is conceivable at all; a resemblance would depend on sharing in it.¹ Thus the correspondence here is only of verbal nature. And reference to such a resemblance is to make human beings understand the attributes of God, though it is clear that neither man nor the world, with all its spheres, was God, nor was God the world. Everything originated in the world is His work, creation, and invention. None other than Him is the Originator and the Creator. He created man and created their actions, and initiated their capacity (qudra) and their movement (haraka). Thus all the actions of man are created by Him and dependent upon His power, as "God is the Creator of everything"; "and God created you and what you make."²³

¹ Maqsaad. p. 18.

² Ihya'. i, p. 98; cf. Qur. 49:62; 6:101-102.

³ cf. Qur. 37:96.

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The Relation of Creation to Man's Acts

The doctrine of the universality of the omnipotence of God has given rise to the following retort: If the power of God is universal, that is if it comprehends all possible things, what would be al-Ghazālī's view on the objects of the power of man? Do such objects of power belong to God, or do they not so belong? If his answer be "no", he will thereby be contradicting his contention that God's power is universal. If he says that these objects of power belong to God, then he would be establishing that an object of power is the object of two separate powers which is an impossible proposition. Moreover, to deny that human beings are capable of originating actions would be contrary to the dictates of reason and of revelation. It is impossible for the human being to be made to account for something that does not lie within his power; and it is impossible to hold that God could say to a person: 'You must do that which is capable of being originated by Me and which lies exclusively within My power, without ^{there} being any power possessed by you over that thing'.

This leads to the problem of free-will and predestination, which is not the subject of this discourse.

Here it will only be shown how al-Ghazālī reconciles the power of God with the creation of man's action.

Al-Ghazālī says that the determinists (Mujbira) had denied the power of human beings. They were thus bound to deny the intrinsic difference between the movement of man's hand shaking with fright and its movement of shaking voluntarily. They were also bound to hold by logical implication that obligations imposed by religion on the individual have no real basis. The Mu'tazilites had denied the correlation of the power of God to the actions of His servants. They have contended that all the actions of created beings are originated by them and that God has no power over these actionsⁿ by way of making them either existent or non-existent. Two corollaries follow from this proposition:

(a) The rejection of what they (the Mu'tazilites) have agreed upon to the effect that there is no creator other than God; and

(b) the attribution of the faculties of invention and creation to the power of entities that do not have any knowledge of the movements which they have created.¹

¹Iqti...p.41; cf. Watt, Free Will and Predestination. pp.96-99; 104; 167.

As regards the Sunnites' belief, al-Ghazālī holds ~~that~~ that they have considered that the two powers are correlated to the action of human beings. In this respect al-Ghazālī says:

Look now at the Sunnites and see how they succeeded in choosing the right view and in attaining 'the right measure in belief'. They said, the contention in favour of determinism (jabr) is impossible and false and the contention in favour of free-will (ikhtiyār) is a presumption. The right course or view is to correlate the two powers to the same action and to hold the view in favour of an originated thing being related to two powers of origination. What remains then would be the improbability of the joint operation of the two powers upon the same action; but this becomes improbable only if the correlation of the two powers is in the same mode. But if the two powers differ and the mode of their correlation also differs, then the operation of the two powers upon the same thing would not be impossible.¹

Al-Ghazālī considers that committal to the view in favour of the possibility of the occurrence of an object of power by the operation of two powers was implied by irrefutable proofs that denote the following:

(a) That the movement of voluntary shaking is different from the movement of the shaking with fright, in that the

¹Iqti...p.42.

human being has to undertake the former but not the latter; and

(b) that the power of God attaches to every possible thing; that every originated thing is a possible thing; that the action of a human being is an originated thing; and therefore it is impossible that the power of God should not attach to that thing.

Al-Ghazālī endeavours to clarify the correlation of the two powers to the action of ^ahuman being, thereby defining the meaning of what he calls "acquisition". In this view, it is reasonable to hold that God creates movement in the hands of ^ahuman being without that movement itself being under the personal control of the individual. Thus God creates the power of the individual and likewise creates the object to be governed by the power of the individual; and God in this manner reserves to Himself the exclusive power of creating the power of ^ahuman being and the object which is governed by that power. He says in this respect:

The creation by God of the movement in the hand of the servant is reasonable, without the movement necessarily being within the power of the servant. The conclusion is that the Potent whose power is wide, is able to furnish the power as well as the object of the power. And whereas the designation of 'creator' and 'furnisher' is applied to everyone who has created the thing with

his power; and because the power and the object of the power are all within the power of God the Almighty, He has been designated as 'the Creator'. The object of the power is never invented by the power of human being, although it accompanies it; for this reason he was never designated as a 'creator'. It was imperative, that a different name should be given for this kind of relative, and the name 'acquisition (al-kasb) has been given to it..."¹

Conclusion

Al-Ghazālī supported the doctrine of creation, as held by Ahl as-Sunna. He believed that God exists; He is eternal; He is neither a substance nor a body nor an accident; He is not limited by direction nor settled in a location; He is One.

The world, which is nothing but the bodies and substances with their accidents, is originated by God through an act of His will and power. The world in its totality is possible, and God is the only cause of its existence. God was and nothing was with Him, and then the world was originated at a particular moment of time which is not determined other than by the will of God.

¹Ibid. pp. 43-44; cf. Ihyā'. i, pp. 98-99.

God is a free agent; He acts and does not act as He pleases. He is not a natural cause bringing about the effect according to mechanistic rules, without thought and choice. Creation was not an obligation upon Him. He is the Creator of everything, and also the sole Creator of human actions, but these are also within the capacity of human beings. And God created both the capacity and what it can accomplish.

The nature of the world is distinct from that of God. He did not create it out of His essence, but brought it into existence out of absolute non-existence, by an action of His own. It was neither originated out of the nature of God, nor was it created out of any primeval matter.

CHAPTER V

Averroes' Views on the Doctrine of Creation

CHAPTER VAverroes' Views on the Doctrine of CreationIntroduction

It has been shown in the preceding chapters that the Muslim Neoplatonists assume that the world is an emanation from the One. It was perhaps to resolve the problem of the One and many, or of the Divine immanence and transcendence, that they put forth the claims which conceived God as a transcendent thought pondering its own essence. On the other hand, a world scheme, in which the notion of transcendent and immanent God,¹ the Originator and Creator of the world, is paramount is bound to view the admission of the eternity of the world with suspicion. Al-Ghazālī supports the Sunnites' belief that the world and time have been created together out of nothing and that it is false to maintain that these were co-eternal with God. The thesis of the philosophers' belief in the eternity of the world was repudiated.

With Averroes the doctrine of creation takes the turn of a conscious reaction against the theological view,

¹Cf. Stade, R.C, Edinburgh University Library (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Oct. 1967. Ch.I).

on purely rational grounds. Having no theological pre-occupation, in his interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine, Averroes develops in the commentaries the Aristotelian teaching. As a Muslim he was aware of the difficulties which the doctrine of the eternity of the world would involve; but he reserves the right of interpretation and declares that the Qur'ān provides a way to truth suitable to everyone through demonstrative, dialectical, or rhetorical methods. He believes that the doctrine of creation ex-nihilo, as upheld by the Ash^Carites, is irrational and untenable, and maintains that such a doctrine derogates the power of God by limiting His activity to one mode of creation and reducing Him to a state of idleness and inactivity throughout the infinite lapse of time preceding the actual creation of the world.

Averroes explains that according to the ancient philosophers (as he supports their view) the world is not said to be eternal per se (qadīm bi-dh-dhāt), since this would entail that it is uncreated; but it is rather said to be eternal in the sense of being an eternal effect co-existent with its eternal cause. He says that hudūth means 'happening', 'becoming', or 'production', but neither in time nor out of nothing. Revelation speaks from the

analogy of sensible production, as though the universe were created out of something already existing. 'Production', however can be proved on the stronger grounds of rational demonstration which contains the notion of eternal creation. Absolute origination there is none, but rather it has always been. Matter and form are both eternal. Averroes agrees with the ideas of the Muslim Neoplatonists, to the extent in which their views are in conformity with the Aristotelian concept of creation.

The investigation in this chapter would involve Averroes' attitude towards reason (philosophy) and revelation (religion) and his methodology to determine the doctrine of creation; the meaning of hudūth al-ālam, khalāqa and other words of similar significance; his proofs for the existence of God, and views on the eternity and causality of the world; and the points where he differs from the Muslim Neoplatonists.

Averroes' Attitude towards Reason and Revelation

Averroes expounds his views on the subject substantially in his two works: Kitāb Fasl al-Maqāl and Kitāb al-kashf 'an Manāhiḥ al-adilla. His main position is that

revelation is based on three principles: belief in God, prophecy, and future blessedness (sa^cāda).¹ These constitute the subject-matter of revelation. As prophecy depends on revelation, reason remains distinct from revelation, unless it is shown that reason and revelation are in accord with each other. But he believes that reason contains nothing opposed to revelation. Reason is investigation into the nature of the existent. And the existent is the created, and the created leads at once to the creator; as reflection on existing things are indications of the creator. It follows that from the point of view of revelation, reason is necessary and leads to proper understanding of its principles. The Qur'ān exhorts man to speculate on the being and knowledge of the Creator in many verses.² And knowledge of the existent can only be obtained through intellect and reflection which consists in deducing the unknown from the known by inference and reasoning. And in this way he says that revelation recommends reason. He further declares that revelation is true, as it is from God; reason, too, is true, as the results reached by human mind. These two truths cannot contradict each other.

¹Fasl.p.44.

²Ibid.pp.27-28; cf.Qur. 59:2; 7:184-85; 3:190-91; 88:17-18.

Averroes, assuming that the statements of both sources are true, and therefore no real contradiction can arise, proceeds to strike the key-note on which depends his entire attitude to reason and revelation. He says if one finds anything in revelation which seems outwardly to contradict the results of reason, one must look for some plausible interpretation of the text and that is to be interpreted in such a way as to be in harmony with the rational. Allegorical interpretation is based on the fact that there are certain Qur'ānic verses which have an apparent (zāhir) and an inner (bāṭin) meaning.¹

But the methods of comprehending God and creation are not the same for all people, though each man has the right and duty to understand and interpret such passages in the most perfect way of which he is capable. Some believe because of demonstrative proofs; others base their opinion on dialectical propositions; and still others are satisfied with rhetorical statements. The one who can understand the philosophical meaning of the text should interpret it thus, for its lofty meaning is the true meaning of revelation; and each time there appears any conflict between

¹Fasl.pp.35-36.

the text of revelation and demonstrative conclusion, it is by interpreting the revelational text rationally that harmony should be established.¹ Averroes sounds a warning that literal acceptance is the duty of the masses and interpretation is the duty of the 'men of demonstration'. Thus, having admitted reason as demonstrative, Averroes set up philosophers as judges of the inner meaning of revelation. Theologians are incompetent because they can only attain dialectical reasoning which starts from popular accepted premises. They are incapable of sound interpretation because they do not possess the qualifications of demonstrative science. He gives two more concessions to philosophy:

(a) Firstly, he says that objections to innovation (bid^ca) cannot be raised, for one can reply that the same applies to the jurist who is continually innovating, yet no one considers it a violation of the principles of the Qur'ān. However, the majority of theologians (Mutakallimūn) recognize inference and reason.²

(b) Secondly, error in philosophical speculation ought not to deter any one from the study of philosophy, since error exists per accidens - either because of the insufficiency of talents, or misunderstanding in one's studies - and not per se.³

¹Ibid. pp.33-35.

²Ibid. pp.30-31.

³Ibid. pp.31-32.

If this principle or method of interpretation is accepted, the question may arise: In what instances is interpretation permitted? Averroes replies that the texts of revelation fall into three kinds with respect to the excusability of error:

(i) Texts which must be taken in their apparent meaning by everyone. Since the meaning can be understood plainly by demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical methods alike, no one is excused for the error of interpreting these texts allegorically. Examples of such texts are concerning: belief in God, prophecy, and blessedness. Whoever denies these principles is an unbeliever.

(ii) Texts which must be taken in their apparent meaning by the masses and interpreted allegorically by the demonstrative class. It is inexcusable for the multitude to interpret them allegorically or for the demonstrative class to take them in their apparent meaning. For example, the verse about God's directing Himself and the Tradition about His descent.

(iii) Texts whose classification under the previous headings is uncertain. Error in this matter by the demonstrative class is excused.¹ For example, the texts about the creation of the heavens and the earth, since

¹Ibid. pp.42-47.

demonstrative scholars do not agree whether to take them in their apparent meaning or to interpret them allegorically. Either is permissible. He says that the Mutakallimūn too in their statements about the world do not conform to the apparent meaning of the text of the Qur'ān but interpret it allegorically.

Averroes returns again to the principles and methods of revelation and compares them with the logical method of reason. The principles of revelation depend on four sources: the Qur'ān; Traditions; Qiyās; and Ijmā^c. Since revelation is truth, its principles must contain what will satisfy and convince all minds, and it should be based on rational interpretation. So far it is compatible with reason. Ijmā^c comes from the unanimous accord of the opinion of all the qualified scholars at a certain time. Since there was no consensus at any time about doctrinal matters, the Mutakallimūn had no right to condemn the philosophers as kāfirs because of their belief in the eternity of the world. Everyone can believe what he likes by means of the demonstrative, dialectical, or rhetorical way. Philosophers must be given the liberty to interpret the text as they choose. In Averroes' opinion the Mutakallimūn sometimes interpreted the text metaphorically when they

should have kept to the letter, and sometimes took passages literally in which they should have found imagery. He does not accuse them of heresy for this, and they should grant him the same liberty.

Preliminary Discussion on the Doctrine of Creation

Averroes says that on the question of the world, the ancient philosophers agree with the Ash^Carites that it is originated and co-existed with time. The Aristotelians only disagree with the Ash^Carites and the Platonists in holding that past time is infinite. This difference is insufficient to justify a charge of heresy. Averroes thinks:

The entire problem of the eternity or origination of the world resolves itself into a mere difference of words - and essentially, the philosophers agree with the Ash^Carites. There are three categories of existence - two extremes and one intermediate: (i) One extreme is a thing caused by an agent, composed of matter and form, and generated in time, for example the various bodies, water, air, etc. All alike, ancients and Ash^Carites, agree in naming this class of existents 'originated'. (ii) The other extreme is an existent, uncaused, made out of nothing, and is not subject to time; it is God. Here too all agree in naming it 'eternal'. (iii) The intermediate, an existent made out of nothing and not preceded by time

time yet created by an agent, that is the world in its totality, is the existence^t that has occasioned much strife and discussion. The Mutakallimūn admit that time does not precede it, or rather this is a necessary consequence for them since time according to them is something which accompanies motion and bodies. They agree with the 'ancients' in the view that future time is infinite, but there is a division of opinion with respect to past time. The Mutakallimūn and Plato hold that past time is finite, while Aristotle and his followers maintain that it is infinite. Be this as it may, this intermediate, or the world in its totality, bears a resemblance both to the things which are really generated and to the eternal Being. The Mutakallimūn view it from the former extreme and call it originated, while the Aristotelians see it from the side of the Infinite and therefore designate it as eternal. Fundamentally it is a question of homonymy (ishtirāk al-ism).¹

Averroes adds here that in truth it is neither really originated nor really eternal, since the really originated is necessarily perishable and the really eternal has no cause.²

Meanings of Hudūth, Khalāqa, and other cognate words

In determining the meanings of such terms Averroes relies mainly on the Qur'ān, but he reserves the right of

¹Ibid. pp. 41-42; cf. also Manāhij. pp. 198-206; & also at-Taha... p. 121.

²Fasl. p. 42; cf. at-Taha... pp. 121-24.

interpretation. According to him, the verb ahdatha means 'to produce', 'to cause to happen or to become', as occurs in the Qur'ān: "that God will bring something new to pass",¹ does not necessarily imply time factor. Absolute origination there is none, it is becoming. Averroes distinguishes two existents: One which is eternal per se; and the other which is eternal because of the first one. The First exists in the past eternally and thus His acts have no beginning. Through this First Existent acts can exist which had no beginning and will never cease, and if this were impossible for the act, it would be impossible, too, for the existent, for every act is connected with its existent in existence. The world cannot have had an origin, because there could be no new decision in the mind of God. ~~He does not~~ ^{He does not} ^{of} ^{"before"} the ~~moment~~ ^{moment} of what never ceases to exist, for this would mean that its existence had a beginning; the same applies to that which is simultaneous with the eternal.² ^{Let us} ~~He~~ ^{he} considers an entity whose existence is perfect - if it is eternal, it follows necessarily that its acts be eternal, for the eternal existent would not be eternally inactive, otherwise what is eternally

¹Qur. 65:1.

²Rasā'il.pp.31,32,93; Manāhij.pp.193-96; cf.also at-Taha...pp.124,16

inactive is necessarily impossible. The acts of that entity whose existence is not limited by time should also be eternal because the priority of that entity over its effect is not in time, but in essence or in importance. If the movements of the celestial bodies and what follows from them are acts of an eternal entity whose existence does not enter the past, then its acts also do not enter past time either. It is, therefore, untrue that what ~~is~~ co-existent with the eternal existent has entered existence. Averroes says:

To apply the expression 'production' for the world's creation as the Divine Law does is more appropriate than to use it of temporal production or origination, as the Ash'arites did, for the act, in so far as it is an act, is a product, and eternity is only represented in this act because this production and the act produced have neither beginning nor end.¹

Khalaqa

Khalaqa, Averroes says, has two meanings:

(a) To form something out of something else, for example:

God is He that created the heavens and the earth,
and what between them is, in six days,
then seated Himself upon the Throne...
And He originated the creation of man
out of clay.²

¹At-Taha...pp.124,162.

²Fasl.p.42; Manāhij.p.205; cf. Qur. 32:7; et passim.

(b) Secondly, to create in a general sense as:

And of water We fashioned every living thing; or
What do you disbelieve in Him who
created the earth in two days...
Then He lifted Himself to heaven when it was
smoke.¹

Averroes says in both of these passages the word khalāqa means creation out of something already existing. The verses: "He created all things", (khalāqa kulla shay');² or "The Creator of everything", (khāliq kulli shay'), could be interpreted in the sense 'to form' or 'to order'. Thus, Averroes says that khalāqa means to form out of something, from clay, water, or smoke. The etymological meaning of khalāqa also indicates creating out of something.

Similarly, according to him, other words like badā^a, or fatāra also suggest to create out of something as the heavens were created out of smoke.³ He also mentions ja^aala and sana^a, as: "We made your sleep for rest, and made the night as a covering."⁴ He says that if the apparent meaning of the text is searched, it will be evident from the verses which give us information about the bringing of the world into existence that its form is originated but its existence in itself is without interruption. Averroes

¹ Fasl.p.42; cf. Qur. 21:30 & 41:9-12.

² Qur. 6:101-102.

³ Fasl.p.43; Manāhiḥ.pp.205-6.

⁴ Manāhiḥ.pp.197-98.

further says that what is clear from the Qur'ān is that God is the agent of creation, knowing its details and regulating it. He is the ordering principle of the world. Creation, according to him, is the ordering of the world which was eternal in matter and form.¹

Proofs for the Existence of God

Again, the proofs, which Averroes gives, for the existence of God are based entirely on the Qur'ān, and the conclusion is deduced from the verses contained in it. But before he proceeds to the exposition of his own views, he discusses the opinions of the various schools. He says that the best known schools of his time are four:

- (1) The Hashwiyya;
- (2) The Ash'ariyya;
- (3) The Mu'tazila;
- (4) The Bāṭiniyya (he does not mention the views of the Bāṭinites).

Averroes says that each has different theories concerning God, and each believes that its views have been handed down from early Islam. In truth, this is not so, most of their dogmas being later innovations and interpretations.²

¹Here Averroes differs from the Muslim Neoplatonists, for according to them it is only the matter which is eternal.

²Manāḥij.p.133.

1. The Hashwites' Views

The existence of God, and the other principles according to the Hashwiyya, must not be subjected to rational investigation; it is known only through trans-¹mission (of revelation). They are commanded by authority and they believe that this is sufficient to ensure truth. They think that faith in God is received from the prophet and that reason has nothing to do with it. In other words, they deny that the existence of God can be demonstrated by human intellect. This view can easily be refuted, since the Qur'ān itself enjoins the speculative consideration of His existence. "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alteration of night and day, there are signs for men of understanding", says the Qur'ān.² If so, one may ask, why did not the prophet give a philosophical demonstration of the existence of the Creator, before he called men to the service of God? Averroes says that the answer is evident: All Arabs believed in God instinctively, and it was not necessary for the prophet to establish this truth for them.³

¹Ibid. p.134; cf. Iqti...p.2.

²Manāhiḥ. p.134; cf. Qur. 3:190; 2:164.

³Manāhiḥ.p.134.

2. The Ash^carites' Views

The Ash^cariyya, on the other hand, maintain that the existence of God lies within the proper field of reason; but in their proofs they make use of non-Qur'^ānic methods. They start with certain dialectical premises such as: that the world is originated, which is based upon the premise that bodies are composed of originated atoms. This theory in itself, Averroes says, is very difficult to understand, but even granting it, does the Creator follow from the originated? Is He eternal or originated? If the latter, there is no end to it. If He is eternal, His action likewise must be eternal. The only solution possible is to hold that an originated action, in the form of becoming, can come from an eternal agent. But the Ash^carites will not admit this, for they believe that everything which is connected with an originated-thing is itself originated. And, again, if things are originated, the agent at one time acts and at other time does not act; there must be a cause, then, which changes the state of the agent. This cause also must have a cause which sets it in action after non-action, and so on ad infinitum. The Ash^carites attempted to answer these questions by saying that an originated action may originate from an eternal will.

This, however, does not remove the difficulty, in Averroes' view, for an origination cannot come from an eternal will without the medium of action. He explains that there are three distinct elements: the thing; the will, which is the cause of the action; and the action, which is the cause of the origination; were this not so, we would have origination without an agent. The Ash^Carites have made the action a middle, but the problem remains the same. Further, this eternal will co-existed with the non-existence of the origination for an infinite time, because the origination was non-existent for an infinite time. The will enters existence actually together with its origination, after the cessation of an infinite time. As the infinite cannot end, this is, of course, absurd. And again, if the eternal will is to cause a certain action, a new element must enter which was not previously present. If one does not assume this, in what way will the existence of the action be distinguished from its non-existence?

In addition to these difficulties, there are many other doubts: The Qur'^ān does not command investigation according to these methods. Averroes says that we must rule out the arguments of the Ash^Carites for two important reasons:

Firstly, the masses cannot comprehend them; and

Secondly, they are not demonstrative.¹

Averroes further criticized the views of the Ash^Carites to build up his own proofs. He says that one of the proofs for the existence of God, generally employed by the Ash^Carites, is based upon three premises:

- (i) Substances are inseparable from accidents;
- (ii) accidents are originated;
- (iii) anything connected with origination is itself originated.

Averroes discusses these individually. He says: The first premise that substances are inseparable from accidents, when applied to ordinary bodies is evident, but when used with reference to atoms, various questions arise. In the first place, the existence of the atom is not known per se, and philosophers are not agreed as to its nature. The Ash^Carites maintain that the existence of the atom is almost axiomatic. When we say that the elephant is bigger than the ant, we mean that it has more parts or atoms. The elephant is not one simple existence, but a composite of atoms, which separate with the destruction of the body. The Ash^Carites erred in their conception of the atom because of a confusion between contiguous (muttasila) and discrete (munfasila) quantity. The former is applicable only to numbers; the latter to bodies. If discrete quantity were equivalent to contiguous quantity, the science of Geometry would coincide with² the science of Arithmetic, which is obviously not true.

¹Ibid.p.137.

²Ibid.pp.138-39.

If, the Ash^Carites further questioned, ~~when~~ the atom has originated, what happens to the origination? Origination is an accident, and when something has originated and exists, the accident is removed, which can never happen according to the Ash^Carites, for accidents cannot be separated from their substances.¹ Again, if the existent comes from the non-existent, with what is the action of the agent connected? In order to obviate this difficulty, the Mu^Ctazila were compelled to assume some being in non-existence. Both of these schools must necessarily, Averroes says, admit the existence of the vacuum. He says:

These doubts, as you see, dialectics cannot dispel. This then should not be made the starting point for the knowledge of God, at least for the masses. The true methods of attaining to a comprehension of God are clearer than these.²

The second premise of the Ash^Carites, all accidents are originated, is as perplexing as their first premise, which states that bodies are originated. One must assume that what one perceives by one's senses to be true in/case^{the} of certain bodies and accidents, is also true in cases where one is unable to make use of one's senses. Time is

¹Ibid. p.139.

²Ibid.

an accident, but it is impossible to form a conception of its being originated. Every originated thing must be preceded in time by its non-existence, and the priority of anything can only be understood in terms of time. If time were originated, would there be time before time? The same is true of space. If space exists as a vacuum, the origination of this vacuum must be preceded by another vacuum and so on ad infinitum. The only fact that the Ash^carites succeed in proving is that the accidents, which the senses perceive as originated, are originated. All the rest, Averroes says, is mere rhetorical quibbling.

The third premise of the Ash^carites that everything which is connected with an originated thing is itself originated - rests on a homonymy. The expression "that which is not independent of an originated thing" may be understood in two ways:

(a) That which is not independent of the category of originated things; or

(b) that which is not independent of this particular originated thing.

When interpreted according to the second sense, the proposition is true. If taken in the first sense, it is untrue, because an infinite number of successive accidents

may enter into one eternal substance.

The second method of the Ash^Carites rests upon two premises. The first premise is that it is possible for anything to be different from what it actually is - it might even be its opposite; in other words nothing is true per se. The world might be larger or smaller, it might have a different form, any motion might be changed. The other premise states that the possible is originated and has an originator, who is the cause of its being one of two possible things rather than the other. Averroës points out that the first premise is merely rhetorical. The second premise stated is that "the possible is originated." This proposition is not at all clear, and the opinion of scholars are not in agreement. Plato admits the possibility of the eternity of a contingent thing; Aristotle denies it. "This is a difficult question the truth of which is only known to the masters of the art of demonstration."¹

Another method of the Ash^Carites is that of Abu 'l-Ma^Cālī. He attempts, as Averroës states, to clarify these premises by adducing others:

- (a) The possible must have a determinant, that is an agent who causes it to realize this possibility rather

¹Ibid.p.146.

than another;

(b) this determinant must necessarily be endowed with will;

(c) anything that exists in consequence of will is originated. The possible must originate from the will, for there are but two alternatives - either it is from nature or from the will; and nature cannot produce one of two similar possibles but must produce both. Since the world might occupy a position in the vacuum different from the position it now occupies, Abu'l-Ma^cālī deduces that it was originated through the will.

This conclusion of Abu'l-Ma^cālī, Averroes says, is true, but the premise regarding the world in a vacuum is incorrect or at least not clear, for he is compelled to assume the eternity of this vacuum, which, if originated,¹ would require another antecedent vacuum. Averroes further comments that the meaning of the third explanatory premise of Abu'l-Ma^cālī - anything that exists in consequence of the will is originated - is not at all evident. The will belongs to the category of the correlative and is inseparable from the realization of the thing willed - if one exists, actually the other does also; for example, father and son. If the will which is actual is eternal, the

¹Ibid. pp. 147-48.

willed which is actual must also be eternal. The Qur'ān makes no mention either of an eternal will or an originated will. It merely remarks that the will is the cause of originated things.¹ Thus, these methods of the Ash'arites are neither evident as rational proofs, nor are these the methods of revelation.

The methods of revelation have two characteristics; firstly, they are evident, and secondly, they are simple, not composite, that the premises are few in number and the conclusions are not far removed from the premises.²

The methods of the Sūfis are not based on syllogistic proof. They follow the mystic way and maintain that in order to comprehend truth, one must emancipate oneself from the restraints of passions and earthly desires. He says that he does not deny the value of suppressing the passions as an aid to speculation - but he will not admit that this suppression brings about knowledge. Moreover, the methods of the Sūfis are not accessible to all mankind, and they abolish speculation to which people are exhorted all through the Qur'ān.³

¹Ibid. p. 148; cf. Qur. 16:40.

²Manāhij. p. 148.

³Ibid. p. 149

As regards the Mu^ctazila, Averroes says, "we have not received their books in Spain, but it seems that their methods are essentially the same as the methods of the Ash^cariyya."¹

If then all the methods of the various schools are unsatisfactory according to Averroes, the question arises what is the correct method to be pursued in this investigation?

Averroes declares that the correct and proper method is the one contained in the Qur'^ān. He says that if one examines the Qur'^ān carefully, one will find that it suggests two methods:

(i) The proof from Providence (dalīl al-^cināyya), that is, the provision made for the comfort and happiness of man in that all existent things were created for his sake.

(ii) The proof from the wonderful creation (dalīl al-ikhtirā^c), that is, the production of organic life, sense-perception, and intellectual cognizance.²

The first proof is based on two principles:

- (a) Firstly, that all existents were created for man; and
- (b) secondly, the harmony in the world must necessarily be brought about by an agent, since it cannot be merely the

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. p.150.

result of chance. The first principle is self-evident - all things serve man, for example the regulation of day and night, the Sun and moon, animals, plants, inorganic bodies, even the construction of the parts of the human organism.

The second proof also rests upon two premises:

(a) Firstly, that the existents were wonderfully created, which requires no elucidation. The Qur'ān speaks in detail as:

Hast thou not seen how that God has subjected to you
all that is in the earth
and the ships to run upon the sea at His commandment,
and He holds back heaven
lest it should fall upon the earth, save by His leave?
Surely God is All-gentle to men, All-compassionate.¹

(b) Secondly, that every created thing has a creator, which is also self-explanatory. In order to attain to a true conception of the wonderful creation, one must study the essence of things, as the Qur'ān says:

Or have they not considered
the dominion of the heaven and
of the earth, and what things
God has created...? ²

These two proofs are the proof from revelation. The verses

¹Ibid. pp.151-52; cf. Qur.22:65.

²Manāhij.p.152; cf. Qur.7:185.

of the Qur'ān, which consider the existence of God, are of three kinds: some contain/^{the}proof from Providence, some the proof from the creation, and some include both.¹ These two proofs - Providence and Creation - are suited to the requirements of both the scholars who have deep insight, and the masses who consider matters superficially. The difference between them is merely one of degree - the difference between the craftsman and the unskilled person. Common people are content with sensuous knowledge, the elite are convinced only by demonstration.

Averroes further says that the significance of God's unity is expressed in the Qur'ān: "there is no god but He."² Negation of other deities is considered to be an additional proof to the affirmation of God's unity and existence. Had there been more than one God, the world would be subject to destruction.³

¹Manāhiḡ.pp.152-53; cf. Qur. Among the first category these verses may be enumerated: 25:59-62; 78:6-16; 80:24-30. As illustration of the second category, we may cite: 6:73; 22:63-65; 86:5-7; 88:17-20. The third category is exemplified: 2:21-22; 3:6; 189-91; 7:185; 17:44; 36:32-34.

²Manāhiḡ.p.155; cf. Qur. 64:13; 59:23.

³Manāhiḡ.p.155; cf. al-Ghazālī's proofs. Ch.IV, pp.146-48

Averroes' conclusion as to the proof for the existence of God is: that the methods of the Ash^carites, the Mu^ctazilites, and the Hashwites are neither demonstrative nor they are suitable for the masses. The proofs for the existence of God as contained in the Qur'^ān are two in number: The proof from Providence; and proof from the Creation. But the question arises:

What relation or accord has Averroes brought between the views of reason and revelation on the subject of the existence of God? The answer is evident: none; for he considers that the popular proofs for the existence of God as given in the Qur'^ān are regarded to be the most satisfactory, since they are intelligible to all. But still one question lurks in the mind: Will it ever be possible to bring within the scope of finite understanding that which transcends human experience?

Averroes' Views on Creation and Eternity

Averroes says that the acts of God can be stated to be:

"Production (hudūth); sending the prophets;

predestination; justice; and resurrection (al-ma^cād).
 These constitute the relationship between God, the world,
 and man.¹"

Production is an act of God. He produces the world providentially, and not by chance. Averroes brings in the same proof, as mentioned earlier, to prove the world's production - dalīl al-ikhtirā^c. But he supports it with cosmological arguments. The world is well-ordered and in a state of the most perfect regularity, which, he says, proves that the existence of the world depends on a wise Creator. Here he presupposes causality, since for him nothing comes to be without a cause, and that there is a definite series of causes emanating from the Prime Cause. According to him, he who denies or cannot understand the caused resulting from causes would have no knowledge of art or the artisan; similarly, he who denies the existence in this world of the dependence of effects on causes would deny the wise Maker.

Averroes believes that the world is produced from all eternity. Production does not take place in time. Averroes identifies the world with movement, and regards the world as eternal becoming.² The world, although it

¹Manāhij.p.192.

²Averroes on Aristotle's De Generatione et Corruption. (Tr.Kurland)
 pp.100-101.

is eternal, has a mover or agent. He stresses one thing, however, that without God as a moving cause, the world could no longer exist. He regards the world as having its matter by itself but as matter cannot exist without form, the existence of the world depends entirely upon the Unmoved Mover. On this point, Averroes rectifies the assumption of the Muslim Neoplatonists. They recognized the principle that "from one only one can proceed or emanate"; consequently, they thought that the one which proceeds from the First Principle is the first intelligence, and from that then evolved the multiplicity of beings. Averroes is of the opinion that a single power comes from the First Principle and the whole world results from it, and all its parts are so ordered and connected that the whole, moved by this power, acts in concert. In animals, for example the different faculties, the members, and the actions are united in a single body; and each animal is judged a single being, having at its disposal a single power. It is because of this power, it can be said that God creates, maintains, and preserves the world, as in the Qur'ān it occurs, "God is powerful over everything." ¹

¹ Manāhij. pp. 195-97; cf. Qur. 2:284; 3:29; 4:12-13; 85:12-16.

Averroes points out that it does not follow that because this power penetrates into manifold beings, it is itself manifold. There flows from the First Principle, a power single in itself, which becomes manifold in the beings that participate in it. Thus, he differs from the Muslim Neoplatonists and says that the Prime Mover is that cause of the world which produces it each instant and moves it. Celestial bodies do not have a perfected existence except through power and movement; and that which gives them this movement is their agent. But the Prime Agent must not in any way suffer action.¹

Averroes distinguishes between eternity with cause and eternity without a cause. God alone is eternal without a cause. The world is eternal because of an eternal creative and moving agent working upon it. The priority of God to the world is not with reference to time. It is solely in His being its cause and that from all eternity.²

For Averroes there is no creation ex-nihilo, once for all, but rather a 'becoming' from moment to moment, whereby the world is maintained and changes. According to his views, a creative power, as mentioned above, is perpetually at work in the world, moving it and maintaining it.

¹Cf. Averroes Middle Commentary (Tr. Kurland) pp. 49-50

²Rasā'il. pp. 31-32; 93.

He conceives the world as an eternal process of becoming. The world as a whole is an eternally necessary unity, without any possibility of non-existence or of different existence.

He believes that Matter and form are both eternal and here he differs from the Muslim Neoplatonists. According to him, matter and form can only be separated in thought. Forms do not wander like ghosts through dull matter, but are inherent in it after the manner of germs. The material forms, in the form of natural forces, operate in an eternal process of generation, never separated from matter, but yet should be called divine. Absolute origination there is none, for all happening is a transition from potentiality to actuality. This is purely Aristotelian concept which Averroes develops in his doctrine of production.

As a proof to his statement about his belief in the production out of something already existing, Averroes says:

If the apparent meaning of the Qur'ān, (on the basis of which the Ash'arites argue), is searched, it will be evident from the verses which give information about the bringing of the world into existence that its present

form is originated, and that by an efficient cause and from some matter.¹

According to Averroes' view the production of the world as described in the Qur'ān consists in its being its present form, not its being brought into existence as matter - it already existed as matter but in another form. He quotes from the Qur'ān: "And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and His throne was upon the waters", taken in their apparent meaning imply that there was a being before this present being, namely, the throne and the waters, and also ~~a~~time before time.² He further quotes from the Qur'ān: "And then He lifted Himself to the heaven when it was smoke". This passage taken in its apparent meaning suggests that the heavens were created from something existing.³

Averroes' investigations into the doctrine of creation lead him to state that there is no absolute creation, and that the eternal motive power is eternally moving it. He does not admit creation ex-nihilo. He believes in a production that is being renewed every instant in a constantly changing world, always taking its new form from the preceding

¹Manāhij.pp.205-6; Fasl.pp.42-43; cf.Qur.11:7

²Manāhij.p.206.

³Ibid; cf. at-Taha...pp.221-22; cf. also Qur.41:11.

existent. He is of the opinion that the continuous and incessant creation is more worthy of the name of creation than that which is accomplished once for all.

Averroes' Concept of Causality in relation to Production

The concept of causality, in relation to creation, is of vital importance in Averroes' philosophy. He says:

It is impossible for the Sunnites to deny the relation existing in this world between causes and effects. To deny the existence of efficient causes which are observed in the sensible things is a sophistry, and he who denies them either denies with his tongue what is present in his mind or is carried away by a sophistical doubt.¹

The world is a continuum of things and persons inter-related through necessary causality. Two principles are presupposed, by Averroes here: The one is the permanence of things, and the other is the law of causation. These two postulates are the result of metaphysical assumptions derived from Aristotle, namely, the idea of substance and the idea of four causes.² Averroes says that the permanence of things permits one to discover their essence

¹At-Taha...pp.515-20.

²Ave. De Gene...(tr) pp.97-106.

to define them and to give them a name. For it is self-evident that things have essences and attributes which determine the special functions of each one of them and through which the definitions and names are differentiated. If a thing had not its specific nature, it would not have a special name or definition, and all things would be one. As to the second postulate concerning causality, all events have four causes: agent, form, matter, and end. Human mind perceives the things and conceives their causes. Intelligence is nothing but the perception of things with their causes and he who denies causes denies intellect. Logic implies the existence of effects and causes, and the knowledge of effects can only be rendered perfect through knowledge of their causes, and thus denial of causes implies the denial of knowledge. Averroes further says that if someone calls the relation of cause and effect a habit; habit is an ambiguous term. Does he mean by habit, the habit of the agent, or the habit of the existing thing, or one's habit to form a habit about such things? He rejects the first two meanings and accepts the last one which is in harmony with his conceptualism. Because it is impossible that God should have a habit; the habit of existing thing is really their nature, since it can only exist in the animated.

Again, the Immovable Mover who is the cause of all cannot be subject to the law of causation. Averroes means that everything except the eternal existent needs a cause for its existence, and only the Prime Immovable Mover has the property of existing through its own essence, whereas all becoming is due to a prime cause.¹ Averroes follows here the Aristotelian conception of generation and corruption. Absolute generation and alteration are one process. The reason for this is that, according to him, the substratum of all changes is a definite thing existing in actuality and capable of no change. It is the cause of all motion, though itself unmoved. All perishable beings are composed of matter and form, each of which is not by itself a body, although through their combination the body exists. Prime matter has no existence in actuality, but it is only potency to receive forms. The first simple bodies in which the prime matter is actualized are the four elements: water, earth, fire, and air. These elements enter in the composition of all other bodies through mixture. The remote cause of this mixture is the heavenly bodies. Natural heat is the proximate cause of the real combination. Organic beings are generated from

¹At-Taha...pp.523-24.

animate individual^s of their kind through natural heat. Soul is the proximate cause of their generation and their remote cause is the intelligence that moves the sphere. Averroes believes that the material form can never be separate from matter, since physical form - which is another expression of material form - subsists only in matter. Forms are temporal since they subsist only because of matter.

Two distinct types of metaphysics reached the Muslims:

- (a) A metaphysics of the One; and
- (b) a metaphysics of Being.

The latter is that of Aristotle, and the former that of Plotinus. Since The Theology of Aristotle was mistakenly ascribed to Aristotle, the Muslim Neoplatonists fused the two systems in the Necessary Being. Averroes returns to the original doctrine of Aristotle and frees himself from Neoplatonism. He says: "our aim is to pick up from the metaphysics of Aristotle his theoretical doctrines."¹ The subject-matter of metaphysics according to Averroes is:

- (i) The study of the sensible things and their genera,

¹Talkhis mā ba^cd at-Tabī^cīyyāt.p.33.

namely, the categories;

(ii) The principles of substance, the separate entities and how they are related to the First Principle, which is the supreme perfection and the Prime Mover.

Averroes starts with the external existents which, he says, are the basis of our knowledge. If an entity exists in our mind without having any real existence outside, it could not be a being, but simply an entity. Being and existents are one and the same. To exist is to be real, whether in potency or in act. Prime matter has being, although it never exists without form. When the intellect is attached to external existence, the being which was outside becomes inside the mind in the form of a concept. Existence, then, is presupposed in being. External existents are called substances. Substance is the first of the ten categories; the rest are the secondary substances. Prime substance has more substantiality than the secondary. For example, Zayd is a man, this denotes that Zayd is more substantial than humanity or manness. But manness is as real as Zayd. The particular has a sensuous existence, and the universal an intellectual one. But the starting points are the individual substances. Physical bodies are commonly said to be composed of two

principles, that is matter and form. But a body is neither only matter nor only form. It is a whole composed of the two. This whole is additional to the two principles of being. The body is one unity which has many parts. By substance, Averroes means the whole composed of matter and form.¹ The one is sensuous while the other is intellectual. Matter is the cause of their corporality and form is the cause of their intelligibility.

But the question which is relevant to this discourse is: how can the eternal entity be the principle of corruptible things? Averroes refers to two Aristotelian principles: potentiality and actuality. The scale of being is graded from pure potentiality to pure actuality. Prime matter is pure potentiality; it can only exist in being combined with form. The lowest existents are the four elements of which sensible bodies are composed. Potentiality can be understood as possibility or disposition. The first substance can exist in actuality or in potentiality. Matter inherent in the substance is its potentiality. This potentiality is of different degrees according to proximity and remoteness. Man, for example,

¹Ibid., pp. 37, 40-41.

exists potentially in the sperm and in the four elements; the first potency is the near one, the latter is the remote one. Four conditions are necessary for a thing to exist:

- (i) The proximate subject;
- (ii) Its disposition;
- (iii) The motor causes; and
- (iv) The absence of preventing causes.¹

There is always a motor cause which brings a thing to exist in actuality. Sometimes there are more than one motor causes. Since physical things are composed of matter and form, potency is always subsequent to matter, and actuality subsequent to form. Form, which is the act, is prior to matter at every point, because form is also the efficient and the final cause. The final cause is the cause of all other causes, since these are there for the sake of it. Further, potency is not prior in time to act, because potency can never be denuded of act. Matter and form exist simultaneously in a being. The motor cause of a physical thing is apparently prior to the existence of a thing. To the distinction between the motor and the efficient cause, the former applies only to change in place, namely, the

¹Ibid.p.90.

movement of translation. All other changes, especially generation and corruption, are caused by efficient causes. Celestial bodies are moved by a motor, not by an efficient cause, because their movement is translation in space and they do not change. They are intermediate existents between pure act and the existents which sometimes exist in potency and sometimes in act. Their similarity to existents in act lies in their eternity and incorruptibility. Their similarity to the things which exist in potency and come to actuality is in their change of place, their circular movement in space. Averroes concludes the discussion of this point by saying:

Consider how divine providence has managed to combine the two kinds of existence. In between pure act and pure potency, it has posited this kind of potency, namely, the potency in space through which the eternal and corruptible existences are connected.¹

Further, act is prior to potency in point of dignity and perfection, because evil is privation of¹ one of the two opposites, it is not absolute good. Pure act is an absolute good.² Hence, the nearer the things are to the First Principle, which is pure act, the better they

¹Ibid.p.94.

²Ibid.p.95.

are. Celestial bodies have obtained their principles from the First Principle. And, likewise, everything on this earth which is good is the product of His will and design. As to evil, it exists because of matter. The world, as it is, is the best possible one. Either it would not have existed at all, or it would have existed having some evil for the sake of greater good. As the sensible substances are composed of matter and form, are these two principles sufficient for the existence of sensible substances? Or, is there separate substance which is the cause of their perpetual existence? Averroes says that it is evident that the sensible is in need of a motor cause, and this cause needs another, up to the First Mover, whose movement is eternal. This brings us to the consideration of time.¹

Time is an eternal continuum subordinate to an eternal movement, which is continuous and one, because the true one is continuous. It is clear that Averroes asserts the eternity of the world on the assumption that both movement and time are eternal. The First Mover moves the primum mobile by desire, not by representation. The world

¹Ibid.p.124.

is animated, that is, it has a soul. It also has an intelligence. Celestial bodies are moved not through sensation and representation, as is the case with animals, but through the conception of intelligence. Intelligence is so called with regard to celestial bodies; with regard to man it is called intellect. Heavenly bodies have no senses, because these are found in animals for their conservation. Representation exists in them for the same end. Celestial bodies are in no need of conservation since they are eternal. Their movements are the product of desire (shawq) through intellection. The first mover of the firmament is moved by the most dignified desire - the desire for the supreme good. The movers of the celestial bodies, are, then, intelligences which are themselves immobile. There are thirty eight movers and nine spheres. The tenth intelligence, or the Intelligentia Agens, is the last of these movers. It moves the sphere of the moon. It is the cause of the movement of the sublunary beings. It is this intelligence which gives forms to the elements and other existents. Man is the nearest being to the celestial bodies, and this is because of his intellect. He is intermediate between

the eternal and the corruptible.¹ Through the agent intelligence, he acquires the forms which are its products. Thus, communion with the agent intelligence can be realized. And in this communion lies man's felicity and happiness.

In this scheme of gradations it can be worked out that Averroes is a strict Aristotelian. He endorses, with all his admiration, Aristotle's theories to their utmost extent, and expands them into a doctrine of his own. He asserts again and again the eternity of the world and declares that not only is matter eternal, but that even form is potentially existent. Averroes differs from the Muslim Neoplatonists on these points:

(a) That both matter and form are eternal; whereas they believe that matter alone is eternal.

(b) Avicenna places the existence of all creatures in the category of the possible; and that of God in the category of the necessary existence. Averroes combats this classification for the simple reason that when it is said that the cause is necessary, its effect must also be necessary in existence, since the effect cannot be separated from its cause. Admitting the world as an effect of an eternal cause, it must likewise be eternal.

(c) Further, the Muslim Neoplatonists believe that the

¹Ibid.p.159.

celestial bodies, like the sublunary bodies, are composed of matter and form, but whatever is so composed is temporal and originated; whereas the ancients believe that the celestial bodies are eternal.

(d) Again, the Muslim Neoplatonists believe that "from one only one can proceed"; according to Averroes, this is their mere guessing. He says that in the books of the ancients this is not found. According to the philosophical teaching thinker and thought are identical. Aristotle connects sensible existence with the intelligible, saying that the world is one and proceeds from the One, and that this Monad is partly the cause of unity, and partly the cause of multiplicity. Averroes believes that a single power comes from the First Principle and the whole world results from it. He holds the view that multiplicity exists, but he explains it because of matter and their distances from the principle and in the dispositions that they have in them. The main objective of Averroes ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ⁱⁿ point out these differences is to say that what the Muslim Neoplatonists believe and profess is not to be found in the thought of the ancients or in the Aristotelian thought.

Conclusion

Averroes worked out his theory of the eternity of the world on the basis of causation. Both God and the world are eternal; both necessarily exist, one without a cause and the other with a cause. Though eternal, the world has a Prime Mover who Himself is unmoved. The world has had no beginning in time. The First Cause is eternally moving the world and necessarily begetting all that is, in virtue of its infinite fecundity. He believes that revelation, too, speaks as though the world had always been and was produced out of something existing.

Averroes' main system is Aristotelian, but under the influence of ideas from Muslim theology, he gave it a new form.

CHAPTER VI

Averroes' Criticism of Al-Ghazālī's Tahāfut

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Introduction

Being a philosopher, Averroes undertakes his duty to defend the cause of the philosophers on the question of the eternity of the world against the fierce attack by the Mutakallimūn. In Fasl al-maqāl and ʿan Manāhiḥ al-adilla Averroes refers to the charges framed by the Ashʿarites and al-Ghazālī against the philosophers' beliefs. And he sets out to refute in his Tahāfut at-tahāfut, what al-Ghazālī stated in the Tahāfut. In his at-Tahāfut Averroes examined the arguments given by al-Ghazālī against the philosophers' beliefs "paragraph by paragraph, refuted in detail its strictures on the philosophers, and incidently expounded his own belief in the ability of reason to comprehend the ultimate secrets of the universe."¹

Averroes believes in the eternity of the world and offers a solution to the problem in no uncertain terms. Both God and the world are eternal and necessarily exist, one without a cause and the other with a cause. His fundamental notion is that the world is not created

¹A History of Islamic Spain. p.41.

ex-nihilo, but it follows eternally from its First Cause in both its existence and intelligibility. Likewise it is untrue that it has been created in time, rather he knows by a necessary demonstration that the First Cause is eternally moving it. Averroes' basic ^{point} ~~objective~~ is that Aristotle had proved both the eternity of the world and time.

Preliminary Discussion

Averroes' arguments against al-Ghazālī's incoherence can be classified under three headings:

1. Firstly, Averroes criticizes al-Ghazālī because his arguments are mostly dialectical and do not reach the level of demonstrative proofs.
2. Secondly, what al-Ghazālī refutes is not the view of Aristotle. In the opinion of Averroes the most that al-Ghazālī could do was to criticize the views of Avicenna and not that of the philosophers. Further, Averroes says that in that too, he doubts the competency of al-Ghazālī, for he studied philosophy from books, without the help of an instructor.
3. Thirdly, Averroes says that al-Ghazālī was insincere in his criticism. According to Averroes, he simply

refuted the views of the philosophers because he wanted to establish his influence in the Sunnites circles, whereas later on he adopted the views of the philosophers as is clear from his other books like Miskāt al-anwār.

It is better to take up these points of disputation individually, and see how far Averroes succeeds, for in the beginning of his Tahāfut at-tahāfut he says:

The aim of this book is to show the different degrees of assent and conviction attained by the assertions in The Incoherence of the Philosophers, and to prove that the greater part has not reached the degree of evidence and of truth. ¹

The First Disputation concerning the Eternity of the world

The discussion for the eternity of the world involves different arguments as proofs:

- (a) The proofs from cause and will;
- (b) the proof from time;
- (c) the proof from the possibility of the world as a whole;
- (d) the proof from matter.

¹At-Taha...(Eng.Tr.). p.1.

Discussion of the First Proof

Averroes begins the discussion with the statement of al-Ghazālī's objection against the philosophers' belief that it is impossible for the temporal to proceed from the eternal; and their argument for the eternity of the world, holding that it always existed with God, co-existed as an effect does with the cause, for example light with the Sun. Averroes says that this belief depends on the demonstrative proofs of cause and will. The world cannot have had an origin, because there could be no new decision in the mind of God for its beginning. God's movement is eternal and cannot be interrupted.¹ If He had not created the world from the beginning, He would have lost His only chance of creating it ever. Averroes says that God will be either always in action or sometimes in potency. If He is always in action, then His work also will be always in action; if He is sometimes in potency, there must be some determinant of this potency. Therefore, either there is an infinite regress, always seeking a new cause for the actualization of this potency, or one must admit that cause and action always co-exist. But he knows it for a fact that the

¹At-Taha...p.4; cf. Ave.Comm.De Gene...(Tr.) pp.100-101.

world exists and it must be eternal, because of an eternal cause. Averroes states that al-Ghazālī's objections in this connection are in the highest degree dialectical and do not reach the pitch of demonstrative proofs.¹ Al-Ghazālī believes, on the other hand, that rationally this thesis cannot claim any superiority over its anti-thesis, which nevertheless has the weight of the Faith on its side. He further says that one need not abandon it unless its anti-thesis be proved conclusively; but this is impossible. Only demonstrative proof should make one abandon the theory of creation, but such proof does not exist in nature.

To prove the eternity of the world, Averroes starts the discussion with the definition of the term. According to him, 'eternal' has two meanings:

(i) Eternal by itself, that is the First Mover, who is unmoved and who suffers no action, and has no cause for its existence.

(ii) Eternal through another, that is which is eternally moved.²

The one which has the principle of movement in itself, and the other which is moved from outside. Al-Ghazālī says

¹At-Taha...p.6.

²Ibid.

that one must distinguish between God's willing something and God's willing it to be eternal, that is between God's eternal will and the eternity of the object of His will. Perhaps God willed what He had ordained to be before it became, and He willed it to be at the time when its becoming should be possible. Regarding al-Ghazālī's argument, that the world has been created by an eternal will which has decreed its existence in the time in which it exists and that its existence begins from the moment it begins, Averroes says that this is sophistical, for an act of will is a complete cause of an event, and when once the will acts the event must follow immediately unless there is an obstacle. He says, "how can the effect be delayed after the cause when the conditions of acting are fulfilled?"¹ In the case of God's willing the world, there is no obstacle, so any delay would be inexplicable. The philosophers believe that everything that happens is necessitated and has a cause, and as it is impossible that there should be an effect without a specific determinant and a cause, so it is impossible that the effect should be delayed when the cause exists. Before the

¹Ibid. p.68.

existence of the world there existed a willer, a will, and its relation to the thing willed. No new willer arose, nor a new will, nor a new relation to the will - for all this is change - how then could a new object of will arise, and what prevented it before? To the Ash^carites' reply - that perhaps God made the origination of the world depend on a certain condition, namely, the lapse of a certain time - Averroes objects that there is no sound analogy between conventional and natural causation, that is, one can in advance make a conventional fact legally effective from a certain time, but an agent cannot cause a natural event at a future time. But according to the Ash^carites an agent who is free (fā^cil-mukhtār) could exercise his will as he pleases.¹

Again, to al-Ghazālī's objection - do the philosophers recognize the impossibility of connecting the eternal will with the temporal production of anything, through the necessity of intuitive thought or through a logical deduction? If the philosophers assert that they know this through the necessity of thought, why do their opponents not share this intuition with them? for the most certain principles must also be the best

¹Cf. Iqti...pp.38,47; & also Ihyā'.i.p.96.

known - Averroes answers that this argument is very weak. It amounts to saying that one who claims the impossibility of delay in an effect, when its cause with all its conditions is realized, must assert that he knows this either by a syllogism or from the first principles; if through a syllogism, he must produce it - but there is none; if from the first principles, it must be known to all. This argument is mistaken that everything should be held by all. It does not imply anything more than its being a common notion, just as the existence of a common notion does not imply objective truth. But this is self-contradiction for according to Aristotle the criterion for objective truth is its universal acknowledgement.¹

The objection that the unity of knowledge, the knower, and the known is an impossibility, is that this supposes the Creator of the world to be ignorant of His own work, which is necessarily absurd.² Averroes says that the whole argument is extremely inept and weak and al-Ghazālī ought not to have filled his book with such

¹At-Taha...pp.14-15.

²Ibid. pp.15-16; cf. Taha...pp.53-54.

talk if he intended to convince the learned; for if there is a controversy about questions like this, that is, the plurality of knowledge and known and the delay of effect of a cause, the final criterion rests with sound understanding. Al-Ghazālī's assertion on the other hand - that there may be a proof of the opposite of a necessary truth - can neither be proved nor refuted, since being in opposition to the law of contradiction, it annuls the idea of proof.

Averroes further says that al-Ghazālī goes on to state: how would the philosophers refute their opponents, when they say that the eternity of the world is impossible, for it implies an infinite number and an infinity of unities for the spherical revolutions, although they can be divided by six, by four, and by two? Are the number of these revolutions even or uneven or both even and uneven or neither even nor uneven?¹ According to Averroes, this too is a sophistical argument. It amounts to saying:

In the same way as you are unable to refute our argument for the creation of the world in time, that if it were eternal, its revolutions would neither be

¹At-Taha...pp.16-17.

even nor uneven, so we cannot refute your theory that the effect of an agent whose conditions to act are always fulfilled cannot be delayed. This argument aims only at creating and establishing a doubt, which is one of the sophist's objectives.¹

Regarding the circular movement, Averroes says the right answer to al-Ghazālī's question is that when one imagines things potentially infinite, there exists no proportion at all. The existence of an infinite whole is neither actual nor possible, but totally impossible. If the movements in the past are infinite, then no movement in the actual present can take place, unless an infinite number of preceding movements is terminated. No philosopher allows the existence of an infinite number of causes, for this would imply the existence of an effect without a cause and a motion without a mover. There cannot be an infinite series of causes: all movement must end in a prime unmoved mover. Averroes further says that when the existence of an eternal prime mover had been proved, whose act cannot be posterior to his being, it followed that there could as little be a beginning for his act as for his being; otherwise his

¹Ibid. (Eng.Tr.). p.9; (Ara.p.17).

act would be possible and not necessary, and he would not be the First Principle. There is a difference in the position of Averroes and Avicenna. The latter places the existence in the category of possible, whereas the former says that it is necessary. In any case the problem is the same.

Al-Ghazālī has his answer. According to him, the theory of a first cause and a prime mover is self-contradictory. Averroes based his philosophy on the Aristotelian notion that the world is eternal; time and movement both are also eternal because of an eternal unmoved mover. The Muslim Neoplatonists, who combine the Neoplatonic ideas with the Aristotelian elements, speak of a creation of the world and an eternal emanation. This does not change the position essentially, since both an eternal cause for an eternally identical effect, and an eternal creation, are contradictory conceptions. Cause and creation both imply change. If, therefore, cause is regarded an antecedent to effect, there cannot be a first cause, since there is no first movement. But according to Averroes there must be an unmoved principle of all movement. If one accepts this, the world in totality

is passive, cause and effect are simultaneous, and God is not the first cause, but in fact the only cause.

However, even this does not solve the difficulty, for if one regards uniform motion, the prime mover is the cause of uniform movement, no cause is needed at all. If, on the other hand, one regards uniform motion as spatial change, a change in the effect presupposes a change in the cause and in this way changes in God would be introduced, in opposition to the philosophers' doctrine, which holds the contradictory view that an unchanging God can be the cause of a changing world. Al-Ghazālī rejects the idea of eternal creation, and asks: how could what always is be brought into being?¹

Averroes in his answer ignores the difficulty of how in the present a past infinite can have come to an end. There is a contradiction in that what^{at} has no beginning can have no end, and that what has no end has no beginning. The act of an agent who has no beginning has a beginning as little as his existence, and therefore it follows necessarily that no preceding act of his is the condition for the existence of a later, for neither of them is an agent by itself and their sequence is

¹Cf. Taha...pp.61-63.

accidental. Averroes says the opinion of the theologians that the philosophers admit their end is erroneous, for they do not admit an end for what has no beginning. He further states that it will be clear that neither the arguments of the theologians for the temporal creation of the world of which al-Ghazālī speaks, nor the arguments of the philosophers which he includes and describes in his book, suffice to reach absolute evidence or afford stringent proof.¹ This position of Averroes is contrary to the views which al-Ghazālī ^{held.} ~~understood.~~ He criticizes the Muslim Neoplatonists because of their contradictory views. Here Averroes rather supports the cause of al-Ghazālī.

Again, answering al-Ghazālī's statement that God's power has no limit, for He could have created the world one or two years before He did; Averroes wants to eliminate the concept of time and to base the argument merely on the concept of possibility. It can be pointed out that the introduction of the concept of possibility does not change the problem, and the difficulty remains the same, that is, the completion of an infinite series.

¹At-Taha...pp.22-23.

Averroes says that it was in God's unlimited power to choose one of the unlimited number of time-points for His creation of time. He then transfers the unlimited possibility of choice in the subject, that is God, to the object, that is the time-points, and regards the possibility as a qualification of these points. The termination of this infinite series of possible time-points would be a condition for the beginning of finite time, which according to the supposition was created by God. The condition introduces, of course, the concept of time which is, however, already implied in the concept of creation. Averroes further says that most people who accept a temporal creation of the world believe time to have been created with it. Therefore, his assertion that the duration of His inactivity was either limited or unlimited is untrue.¹ Here again Averroes misrepresents the view-point of al-Ghazālī who uses a similar argument against the philosophers. The philosophers' objection to the time theory of creation is: that one time would be as good as another for the creation of the world, so it is impossible to find a specific determinant (mukhassis)

¹Ibid. pp.31-32.

for God's choice of a finite time for the creation. A determinant is necessary because it is impossible to imagine a choice between two completely similar things, without any differentiating reason for the preference.¹ The same is true of the Divine will as of human will.

Al-Ghazālī's answer to this is that the will is essentially that which differentiates one object of choice from another. But one need not ask a reason for its choice. Free-will is just that which can choose between two similar alternatives. The argument is conducted on two levels: human and Divine will. Of human will, al-Ghazālī gives the example: Suppose two similar dates in front of a man who has a strong desire for them, but who is unable to take them both. Surely he will take one of them through a quality in him, the nature of which is to differentiate between two similar things. It is absurd to say that the man remains forever hungry and perplexed, looking at the dates without taking one of them, and without power to choose or to will, distinct² from his desire. Averroes' reply to this is that the real choice in such a case is not merely between one date

¹Ibid. pp.37-41; cf. Taha...pp. 49-52, 56,59-60.

² At-Taha...p.38; cf. Taha...pp.51-52.

and the other, but between taking either one or leaving both; and there is a clear reason for taking, namely hunger. Averroes has missed the point completely. Certainly the will is going to choose one or the other of the dates rather than go hungry. But he has indicated a question in the situation - what determines one to take the one rather than the other? He says that man will take the largest possible date as soon as possible, and if they are of equal size, he will take the one that presents itself at the moment when that fact is discovered. The argument on Divine will follows a parallel course. Al-Ghazālī disagrees with Averroes. He gives some example of the features of the cosmos which might have been different without being either better or worse: for example, the spheres of the Ptolemaic heaven might all have moved in an opposite direction, from East to West instead from West to East, and vice versa. This would make no difference so long as all movements were reversed, leaving all relations between the spheres as before. Therefore, there is no reason for God's choice of one direction rather than another. Averroes replies that if one studies science closely enough one can always find

that the existing condition of the world is superior to the alternatives, in all cases. God has acted wisely for the best. What God chose between was, in the first place, the existence or non-existence of the world.

Here there is no choice between similars, and He chose the better, namely the existence of the world. Why did God choose to move the highest sphere from East to West?

It was because the direction that occurred first after He saw that the direction was indifferent, and He wanted to continue His good world. This would mean that God must have created the world from eternity, because He saw from eternity that the existence of a world such as ours was better than its non-existence.

But this argument falls to the ground if one believes that there is no analogy between a Divine will and a human will. Many possibilities then arise, for example, God can act for the worse if He wishes; or He can choose arbitrarily between equals; or if He needs a determinant, such a determinant springs up within Himself. Again, al-Ghazālī says that the question of the eternity of the world cannot be solved from the considerations of the Divine will, for one does not know enough about the nature of that will, though one guesses a great deal.¹

¹Cf. Taha...pp.58-59.

Concerning al-Ghazālī's second objection to the philosophers' proof of the eternity of the world on grounds of causality, Averroes protests that al-Ghazālī has misinterpreted the way in which the eternal Being causes the temporal event. Each event has its accidental cause in an infinite series of preceding temporal beings; such a series is apparently possible. Only the whole eternal series is caused essentially by an eternal Being acting upon the whole. Thus, the eternal Being is not a cause of temporal beings qua temporal, and so the philosophers have admitted that God can act directly in time. ~~He~~ Averroes explains that moving essentially means moving by a mover existing simultaneously with the thing moved, and moving accidentally means moving by a mover preceding the thing moved. As a matter of fact this annuls the proof, for it cannot be seen why an infinite series of accidentally moving movers should not suffice. Al-Ghazālī, however, makes a more careful statement of the philosophers' theory of creation, which does try to avoid a direct intervention of God in temporal events. He proceeds to show that their theory is unsatisfactory and fails to explain change. The philosophers link the eternal Being with the temporal through an intermediary being, the

outermost heaven, which is in endless circular movement. This movement is eternal essentially, in its universal aspect, being circular and endless, but it is generable and corruptible in respect of its particular movements which are transient, and always changing. The theory was produced by the philosophers to get them out of a difficulty: how can a changeless Being be a cause of movement? Movement can only be caused by another movement by its mover; but a changeless Being could not stir such a movement in Himself. The intermediary being's movement is supposed to follow more easily from an eternal changeless Cause, because it is itself eternal and changeless in a certain respect. But at least it moves, so that it can ⁱⁿ turn start all the particular movements of the world. All this, however is a subterfuge. The difficulty, as al-Ghazālī points out, remains. For there is obscurity in the link at least on one side of the intermediary. He puts a dilemma: Is the circular movement the principle of temporal things because of its permanence? But how can a temporal event proceed from something because of its permanence? Or, is it the principle of temporal things because of its arising anew?

But what arises anew will need a cause for its arising anew, and there is an infinite regress. Averroes says that this is sophistical. The temporal proceeds from the circular movement qua temporal; but this process does not need a fresh cause, for it is "not a new fact, but an eternal act".¹

But it is still not clear how an eternally same movement (the cycle) could cause the changes of the world. Al-Ghazālī shows the unsatisfactoriness of the philosophic theory of change in time, arising from an eternal changeless Being without any act of his in time. He believes if the temporal events of the world are caused by a creator, they must be caused by him in a more individual manner, and he must be able to act in time directly. And in this case there is no reason why God should not have created the world as a whole by a direct act in time, and not from eternity.²

Again, arguing^{for} the notion of causality, Averroes says that according to al-Ghazālī the connection between what is usually believed to be a cause and what is believed to be an effect is not a necessary connection. Each of the two things, has its own individuality and is not the

¹At-Taha...p.63.

²Taha...pp.66,70.

other, and neither the affirmation nor the negation, neither the existence nor the non-existence of the one is implied in the affirmation, negation, existence, and non-existence of the other. For the connection in things, according to al-Ghazālī, is based on a prior power of God to create them in a successive order, and not because this connection is necessary in itself.¹ Averroes says, "to deny the existence of efficient causes which are observed in sensible things is sophistry, and he who defends this doctrine either denies with his tongue what is present in his mind or is carried away by a sophistical doubt."² He maintains that everything in the world happens according to a perfect regularity and the existence of the world can be understood in terms of cause and effect. The world is a continuum of things and persons interrelated through necessary causality. Human mind perceives things and conceives their causes and who denies causes denies the intellect. Logic implies the existence of causes and effects, and knowledge of the effects can only be rendered perfect through the knowledge of their causes. Denial of cause implies the denial of knowledge, and the denial of knowledge

¹At-Tah...pp.517-18; cf.Taha...pp.195-96.

²At-Taha...(Eng.Tr.) p.318.

implies that nothing in this world can really be known. He further says that one need not doubt that some of the existents cause each other and act through each other, and that in themselves they do not suffice for their act, but that they are in need of an external agent whose act is a condition of their act, and not only of their act but even of their existence. However, about the essence of this agent or of these agents the philosophers differ in one way, although in another they agree. They all agree in this, that the First Agent is immaterial and that its act is the condition of the existence and acts of existents, and that the act of their agent reaches these existents through the intermediation of an effect of this agent, which is different from these existents and which, according to some of them, is exclusively the heavenly sphere, whereas others assume besides this sphere another immaterial existent which they call the bestower of forms (wāhib as-suwar).¹

Here again Averroes has missed the argument of al-Ghazālī. According to al-Ghazālī the real difficulty of the philosophers was their adherence to a ^othoroughly

¹Ibid. pp.522-24.

deterministic world view on account of which they sought naturalistic explanation of all things, that is, their explanation in terms of cause and effect. He challenges the views of the philosophers that the relation between cause and effect is a relation of necessity and that this relation between them is a relation of one to one. He declares that there is no compelling necessity in the relation between cause and effect.¹ The phenomena of nature and nature as such, according to the philosophers' own admission, does not belong to the realm of necessity but to that of possibility such as may or may not exist. Any two events in nature considered as cause and effect are merely possible existents and per se there can be no necessary connection between them. The causal relation is a natural, that is, a possible relation and not a logical necessity. Logical relations belong to the sphere of thought and not to that of nature. One certainly does get a semblance of necessity subsisting in the relation of cause and effect because it gets transferred from the order of nature to that of thought through a repeated association of ideas of cause and effect in the mind. So whatever necessity there is in

¹Taha...pp.195-96.

the causal connection is a pseudo-necessity. Cause either co-exists with the effect or precedes it, but it is never the producer of it. Al-Ghazālī says that no will can be attributed to causes nor to any of the natural existents. Further, the relation between cause and effect is not that of one to one as supposed by the philosophers. Cause is not single but composite, with an indefinite number of contributory factors, some of which are positive and the other negative. Al-Ghazālī's position is two-fold:

(i) The philosophers' concept of causation is self-contradictory - the notion of causation is ad infinitum; and an unmoved mover cannot be the cause of a changing world; and

(ii) the law of causation does not leave any liberty to God, whatever, since God must conform to the law. One might perhaps say that God has chosen the law Himself, however, once this law is chosen He can no longer infringe it. Further, Averroes' position is also self-contradictory with regard to causation. He holds that there are accidental events. It appears that he means that under different conditions things may act¹ differently.

¹At-Taha...p.521; cf. Van Den Bergh, note 319,i.

Discussion of the Second Proof

Averroes starts the discussion of the second proof for the eternity of the world with al-Ghazali's version of the philosophers' proof. According to al-Ghazālī, the philosophers assert that God is prior to the world not temporally but essentially like the relation of one to two, or the priority of the movement of a man to the movement of his shadow which follows him. Since the effect always follows the cause, it is absurd to say that God is eternal and the world is temporal. If God is prior to the world and time, but temporally, then it follows that before the existence of the world and time, there was a time in which the world was non-existent, since non-existence preceded the world and God preceded the world during a period which came to an end, but which had never begun. Accordingly, there must be infinite time before time. But this is self-contradictory. Therefore the assertion that time had a beginning is absurd. And if time - which is the expression of the measure of movement - is eternal, movement must be eternal. And the necessity of the eternity of movement implies the necessity of the eternity of the thing in motion, through the duration of which time endures.¹

¹At-Taha...p.64; cf.Taha...p.65.

Averroes makes the criticism that the way al-Ghazālī reproduces the argument of the philosophers does not prove anything. It amounts to saying that the Creator, if He is prior to the world, must either be prior in time or not in time, but in causation. If He is prior not in time but in causation, if He is eternal, then the world too is eternal. But if He is prior in time, then He must precede the world by a time which has no beginning, and time will be eternal; for if there is a time before the actual, its starting-point cannot be imagined. And if time is eternal, movement too is eternal, for time cannot be understood without motion. And if motion is eternal, the thing in motion will be eternal, and its mover will necessarily be eternal too.¹ But this proof is unsound according to Averroes, since it is not of the nature of the Creator to be in time, whereas it belongs to the nature of the world to be so. Averroes believes in two kinds of existence:

(a) One in the nature of which there is motion and which cannot be separated from time;

(b) the other in the nature of which there is no motion and which is eternal and cannot be described in

¹At-Taha...p.65.

terms of time.

The first is known by the senses and by reason; and the second is known by proof to everyone who acknowledges that each motion needs a mover and each effect a cause, and that the causes which move each other do not regress infinitely, but end in a first cause which is absolutely unmoved. And it has also been established that the entity in the nature of which there is no movement is the cause of the entity in the nature of which there is movement. And it has been proved also that the entity in the nature of which there is motion cannot be separated from time, and that the entity in the nature of which there is no movement is entirely free from time. Therefore the priority of the one over the other is based neither on a priority in time, nor on the priority of that kind of cause and effect, which belongs to the nature of things in motion. For this reason anyone who compares the priority of the unmoved being to the thing in motion to the priority existing between two things in motion is in error.¹

But al-Ghazālī in his response to the proof neither challenges the Aristotelian definition of time as

¹Ibid. pp.66-67.

the measure of motion nor does he question the legitimacy of the inference of the eternity of motion from the eternity of time. He only argues that time and the world were created together. God precedes the world in a non-temporal sense of "before".¹ Al-Ghazālī did not reproduce the Aristotelian argument pure and simple. His source is the concept of time as represented by the Muslim Neoplatonists, especially Avicenna, and it is in that formulation that he reproduces the argument.² The Muslim Neoplatonists introduced the argument from time in conjunction with the problem of God's priority to the world. The eternity of God is assumed throughout the proof and is used to argue for the eternity of time. What this argument involves is that God's priority cannot be temporal and the central metaphysical issue in the proof is not the nature of time, but the nature of God's causality.

Averroes further says in this connection that the previous Muslim philosophers' proof is merely dialectical because it makes an assumption about God being in time. Thus, his own statement that the Muslim philosophers made

¹Taha...p.66.

²Cf. Naj...pp.256-57.

certain mistakes "since they enjoyed but slight comprehension of the doctrine of the ancients",¹ in no way refutes what al-Ghazālī said. Al-Ghazālī's primary objective in the Tahāfut was to point out the inconsistencies involved in the philosophers' thought and not to winnow the chaff. Al-Ghazālī believes that time is generated and created, and before it there was no time at all. The meaning of the statement that God is prior to the world and to time is that He existed without the world and without time, then He existed and with Him was the world and time. He further says that the existence of time is taken to be co-extensive with the existence of the moving world. But there is no evidence that this moving world is infinite. Any extension of time beyond this world thus has no more basis than imagination.

Averroes admits that these existences are not simultaneous, and says that al-Ghazālī's observation, that the priority of the Creator to the world is not a temporal priority, is true. But the posteriority of the world to the Creator, since He does not precede the world in time, can only be understood as the posteriority of effect

¹At-Taha...p.67.

to cause, for priority and posteriority are opposites which are necessarily in one genus. Since therefore this priority is not in time, the posteriority also cannot be in time: how can the effect be delayed when the conditions of acting are fulfilled? But here is the contradiction in Averroes' argument, for here the relation between God and the world is, notwithstanding the denial immediately preceding, regarded as a causal relation in which the cause does not precede the effect¹ but is eternally simultaneous with it.

Averroes further says that the philosophers, however, since they do not recognize a beginning in the totality of this existence in motion, are not touched by this difficulty, and it is possible for them to indicate in what way the temporal beings proceed from the eternal. One of their proofs that the existence in motion has no beginning, and that in its totality it does not start, is that, when it is assumed to start, it is assumed to exist before its existence, for to start is a movement, and movement is of necessity in the thing in motion, equally whether the movement is regarded as taking place in time or at an instant. Another proof is that everything

¹Ibid. pp. 67-68; cf. Van Den Bergh note 3 to p. 39 of his trans.

that becomes has the potentiality of becoming before it actually becomes; potentiality is a necessary attribute of being in motion, and it follows necessarily that, if it were assumed to become, it would exist before its existence.¹

Averroes' position is that time is the measure of movement. If it can be proved that time is eternal, it would follow that a moving being too is eternal - that is the world. If time is nothing but an attribute of movement, then the only valid way to find out the extent of time is from the evidence of the extent of movement. But Averroes shifts his argument and says that whenever the world began, one can always conceive a time before it, and this time must be eternal. Then he goes on to deduce from this eternal time an eternal movement, because time cannot exist without movement! Instead of inferring the extent of time from the extent of movement, Averroes has inferred the extent of movement from the extent of time, an illicit process.² Al-Ghazālī, therefore, accepting time as derived from actual

¹At-Taha. p.69.

²Cf. Al-Ghazālī's Criticism Ch.III, pp.82-83.

movement, has simply to point out that any extension of time beyond actual movement is purely imaginary.

Regarding the analogy between time and space, al-Ghazālī says that the philosophers admit that space is finite, because it is an attribute of a body which is finite. So why do they not admit likewise that time is finite, because it is an attribute of finite movement? Averroes does not see the soundness of the analogy and he confuses space with physical points, then accuses al-Ghazālī of making physical points analogous to time, a false analogy.¹

The Third Proof for the Eternity of the world

The third proof for the eternity of the world² revolves around the possibility of the world as a whole. It can be stated thus: Everyone must admit that at least the possibility of the world's existence is eternal; for it could never have been impossible and then became possible. But what can possibly exist eternally must actually do so, because "what can receive eternity cannot

¹At-Taha...pp.83-90.

²Ibid. pp.97-100.

become corruptible",¹ that is, have a beginning or ending. It is not clear how this conclusion follows unless one sees that the argument rests on another supposition, that the world as a whole is ungenerated. And everything ungenerated is eternal, because by definition it could never have come into existence or been corrupted. In this case it can be argued that the world is certainly possible. It has existed actually at some time. But if it existed at any time it must have done so at every time, since it is not subject to generation and corruption (al-kawn wa-l-fasād).

The assumption made, that the world is ungenerated, begs the whole question at issue. If one substitutes "Socrates" for "the world" one can start off with the premise:

"The possibility of Socrates' existence is eternal." But it is obvious that one cannot prove from this that Socrates is actually eternal. Al-Ghazālī says that eternal possibility does not imply eternal actuality, "for reality does not conform to possibility but differs from it."² He does not see the assumption, that the

¹Ibid.p.98.

²Taha...pp.73-74.

world as a whole is something ungenerated. Even if he had seen it, he would not have accepted it as a proved truth.

The Fourth Proof

The fourth proof concerns the relation of possibility to matter, inside the world. The philosophers believe that while the world as a whole is ungenerated and incorruptible, it is continually changing. Change means the combination of fresh form in matter, making new things actual. Now every new combination was eternally possible. But possibility requires a substratum, matter, in which changes of form take place. Therefore this substratum, matter, must be eternal. According to Averroes 'becoming' is the alteration of a thing and its change, from what it has potentially, into actuality. There exists, therefore, a substratum for the contrary forms, and it is in this substratum that the forms interchange.¹

It seems that the philosophers, including Averroes, confuse logical possibility with potentiality. Their

¹At-Taha...p.102.

argument can be put in the form of syllogism:

"Every potentiality is eternal.

Matter is implied by every potentiality.

Therefore matter is eternal."

In this syllogism, it is obvious that the supposed middle term is ambiguous. It cannot lead to the desired conclusion. Moreover, there is no justification for an assertion that every potentiality is eternal, for potentialities are peculiarly temporal. Therefore, there is no proof of the eternity of matter.

Al-Ghazālī says that even if one accepts the philosophers' argument - that possibility has some kind of objective existence as an object of knowledge, still this would prove nothing about the actual existence of the world. Nothing can be proved about the actual from the possible. This is inevitable because the nature of the actual can only be known from evidence, and the possible provides no evidence.¹ The logically possible always offers at least two alternatives, for if "A is B" is possible; "A is not-B" must also be possible; but logic provides no way of choosing between them and

¹Taha...pp.76-77.

deciding which is true. Such a decision can only come from actuality, by observation and inference. In the issue, al-Ghazālī points out, both an eternal and a finite world are possible; therefore no amount of reflection about possibility will tell us which is actual.

Averroes says that for the philosophers, the truth about the world can be deduced by demonstrative arguments (syllogism) which make use of sound premises.¹ And the premises can be known in two ways: by observation of the world, which gives an empirical knowledge; and by intellectual apprehension of primary axioms, which give intuitive knowledge. These axioms are not analytic statements, known to be true by mere analysis of language. But they are thought of as no less ultimate truths, which cannot be proved or disproved by further argument. The test of their certainty is that all men of sufficient understanding and education admit them, just as anyone with these qualities admits mathematical truths. Consequently, if one accepts the axioms together with the empirical knowledge and beliefs, one should be able to work out for oneself the same conclusion about the world - provided there are no fallacies in the reasoning on

¹Fasl.pp.27-30.

either side.

But this is what al-Ghazālī has already pointed out. He says:

The philosophers try to infer the truth of their metaphysical theories from the clarity of the arithmetical and logical sciences. And this method sometimes carries conviction with the weak-minded. But if there metaphysical theories had been as cogent and definite as their arithmetical knowledge is, they would not have differed among themselves on metaphysical questions as they do not differ on the arithmetical.¹

Again, al-Ghazālī in al-Munqidh repeats the same argument:

Here occur most of the errors of the philosophers. They are unable to satisfy the conditions of proof they lay down in logic, and consequently differ much from one another here.²

conclusion

Our ~~investigation~~[^] so far is that Al-Ghazālī accepts in principle all the rational sources of knowledge accepted by the philosophers: Observation; Axioms; and Reasoning (Inference and Syllogism).³

¹Taha...p.40 (Preface I).

²The Faith & Practice.p.37.

³Cf. Iqti...pp.5-13.

The difference between him and the philosophers, in the sphere of knowledge, is that he rejects much of their particular reasoning as fallacious or contradictory, and holds that some of their most important axioms are not based on intuition. The weakness of their axioms is more serious when they base their metaphysical theories on the arithmetical and logical sciences. It leads him to conclude that the philosophers' position, as for example on the origin of the world or of its eternity, cannot be proved by direct rational methods. Reason is valid as far as it goes, but it does not cover as much ground as the philosophers think.

The philosophers including Averroes have asserted, for example that it is impossible to see in an eternal Will of God a cause producing the world in time, after a delay and not from eternity. Al-Ghazālī answers that such an assertion of impossibility must either be proved by argument or known by intuition, by a direct necessity of thought. If it is proved, the philosophers should bring forth their argument, as they say they are men of demonstration. If it is known by intuition, why do their opponents not share this intuition? Averroes believes that the assertion in question is derived from

the axiom: "Effect follows cause immediately", and he answers al-Ghazālī's methodological objection by saying: "it is not a condition of objective truth that it should be known to all."¹ But this as it stands is not only an unsatisfactory answer but also self-contradictory, for to Aristotelians the test of the objective truth of the first and fundamental principles is their universal acknowledgement. Perhaps Averroes is thinking of a well-known qualification of the principle of universal acknowledgement: that the judge of the philosophical truth must have natural intelligence and an intellectual education.² But the answer is still unsatisfactory, for if such a conflict arises about a supposed intuition, it is of no use saying dogmatically: "My intuition is sound and yours is unsound". The right course is that one should be able to obtain agreement from every reasonable judge. If one cannot, then it is well to look at the supposed intuition more closely and ask whether it really is true.³ It appears that al-Ghazali's position is stronger than that of the philosophers on the ground of methodology.

¹At-Taha...p13.

²Ibid.p.31; cf. Fasl.p.35-36.

³Iqti...pp.9-12; & cf. also al-Ghazali's Views Ch.Iv,pp.115-18.

The Second Disputation

Averroes says that al-Ghazālī has misunderstood and misinterpreted what the philosophers mean by saying that the world has a maker and it is his product. According to him, al-Ghazālī's definition of the agent 'as willing, choosing, and knowing what he wills', is by no means self-evident and cannot be accepted without a proof, unless one is justified in inferring the divine from the empirical.¹ He says that one observes in the empirical two kinds of agents:

(a) One who performs exclusively one thing and this essentially, for instance warmth which causes heat and coldness which causes cold; and this kind is called by the philosophers natural agents.

(b) The second kind of agents are those that perform a certain act at one time and its opposite at another; these, acting out of knowledge and deliberation, are called by the philosophers voluntary and selective agents. But the First Agent cannot be described as having either of these two actions, in so far as these are ascribed to transitory things by the philosophers. For he who chooses and wills lacks the things which he wills, and

¹At-Taha...p.148.

God cannot lack anything He wills. And he who chooses makes a choice for himself of the better things, but God is in no need of a better condition. Further, when the willer has reached his object, his will ceases and, generally speaking, will is a passive quality and a change, but God is exempt from passivity and change. So the way in which God becomes an agent and a willer has not become clear in this place, since there is no counterpart to His will in the empirical world.¹ But the philosophers believe in the First Agent and that He acts. They believe that God's act does proceed from Him through knowledge, not through any necessity which calls for it. Averroes points out that al-Ghazālī seeks to perplex, and does not look for the truth. Again, when al-Ghazālī says that all that is said by the philosophers, is said in a metaphorical way and that only a voluntary act is a proper act, Averroes retorts:

This is an answer of the wicked who heap fallacy on fallacy. Ghazālī is above this, but perhaps the people of his time obliged him to write this book to safeguard himself against the suspicion of sharing the philosophers' view. Certainly nobody attributes the act to its instrument, but only to its first mover.²

¹ *Ibid.* p.149; but this position of Averroes is contrary to the one he took in *Fasl*, where he states that the created leads to the Creator. Al-Ghazālī can point out, does he find a counterpart of God's creativity in the empirical.

² *At-Taha*...p.95(Eng.Tr.); *Ara*.pp.159-60.

Averroes further makes the allegation:

Al-Ghazālī himself deceives by ascribing to the philosophers theories which they do not hold. If the world were by itself eternal and existent, not in so far as it is moved, for each movement is composed of parts which are produced, then indeed, the world would not have an agent at all. But if the meaning of 'eternal' is that it is everlasting production and that production has neither beginning nor end, certainly the term 'production' is more truly applied to him who procures a limited production. The philosophers call the world eternal simply to safeguard themselves against the word 'product' in the sense of a 'thing in time'.¹

Averroes again objects to the contradiction pointed out by al-Ghazālī that the meaning of 'product', according to the philosophers, is 'that which exists after non-existence'. But at the same time Averroes admits:

This is an argument put forward on this question by Avicenna from the philosophical side. It is sophistical, because Avicenna leaves out one of the factors which a complete division would have to state. For he says that the act of the agent must be connected either with an existence or with a non-existence...²

Averroes says that Avicenna neglects potential existence and his argument is faulty, because the act of

¹At-Taha...p.162.

²Ibid. p.163-64; cf. Naj.p.213.

the agent is only connected with existence in a state of non-existence, that is existence in potentiality. But al-Ghazālī is not at all concerned with this formulation of the Aristotelian argument. His source, as before, is Avicenna's Najāt and Shifā'. And it is on the basis of these that he formulated his arguments.¹ So Averroes' objection against al-Ghazālī is irrelevant, for he himself admits that Avicenna's arguments about metaphysical points do not express the idea of the philosophers. Whether this is true or not, this does not affect what al-Ghazālī contests. He never undertook to criticize Aristotle but concentrated on the refutation of the philosophic thought as it emerged from the writings of al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Al-Ghazālī says:

In transmitting the philosophy of Aristotle, however, none of the Islamic philosophers has accomplished anything comparable to the achievements of these two men named. The translations of others are marked by disorder and confusion, which so perplex the understanding of the student that he fails to comprehend; and if a thing is not comprehended how can it be either refuted or accepted?²

Though al-Ghazālī praised both al-Fārābī and Avicenna as

¹Cf. Taha...pp.93-97; & also Naj...p.213.

²The Faith & Practice.p.32.

translators, he also stated that the translations themselves had been subject to interpolation and change which necessitated additional commentaries and exp^{an}lation.¹

Again, commenting upon al-Ghazālī's remarks - that our aim in this question is to show that you philosophers use those venerable names without justification, and that God according to you is not a true agent, nor the world truly His act, and that you apply this word metaphorically -

Averroes says:

In this argument he supposes that the philosophers concede to him that they only mean by God's agency that He is the cause of the world, and nothing else, and cause and effect are simultaneous. But this would mean that the philosophers had abandoned their original statement, for the effect follows from its cause, in so far as it is a formal or final cause, but this does not necessarily follow from its efficient cause, for the efficient cause frequently exists without the effect's existing. Ghazālī acts here like a guardian who tries to extract from his ward the confession of having done things he did not allow him to do.²

Averroes says that the philosophers' theory is that the world has an agent acting from eternity, that is

¹Taha...p.40 (Preface I).

²At-Taha...p.103 (Eng.Tr.) Ara.p.171.

converting the world eternally from non-being into being. The principle idea is that according to the Aristotelians the celestial bodies subsist through their movement, and He who bestows this movement is in reality the agent of this movement and, since the existence of the celestial bodies only attains its perfection through their being in motion, the giver of this motion is in fact the agent of the celestial bodies. Further, they prove that God is the giver of the unity through which the world is united, and the giver of the unity through which the composite exists. He provides the existence of the parts through which the composition occurs, because this action of combining is their cause, and such is the relation of the First Principle to the whole world. And the statement that the act has come to be, is true, for it is movement, and the expression 'eternity' applied to it means only that it has neither a first nor a last term. Thus the philosophers do not mean by the expression 'eternal' that the world is eternal through eternal constituents, for the world consists of movement. And since the Ash^carites did not understand this, it was difficult for them to attribute eternity at the same time to God and to the world. Therefore the term 'eternal

becoming' is more appropriate to the world than the term 'eternity'.¹

But this argument of Averroes supporting the views of the Muslim Neoplatonists with fresh statements of his own, does not affect what al-Ghazālī criticizes. Al-Ghazālī based his refutation on the statement of Avicenna, where he defends the theory of simultaneity of cause and effect. According to his conception of causation God cannot be regarded any longer as a creator, nor even as a cause of change, as a prime mover.² God is merely regarded as a power which holds the world together. Further, if Averroes says that al-Ghazālī misunderstood what the Muslim Neoplatonists meant in their books, this is not based on facts. When al-Ghazālī wrote his Maqāsid and it reached Europe through Muckle's translation, the book was taken to be the work of a genuine Aristotelian.³

It is strange that Averroes frequently reproaches the philosophers of Islam for misinterpreting the doctrine of Aristotle, and he criticizes al-Ghazālī in turn for

¹Ibid.p.172.

²Cf. Shifā'.p.525.

³Cf. Ch.II,pp.34-35.

misunderstanding their views. For example, al-Ghazālī points out that the philosophers do not admit that the world is the act of God, because of a condition which is common to the agent and the act, namely, the Muslim Neo-platonists' assertion that out of one only one can proceed.¹ Averroes admits that if one accepts this principle and its consequences, then indeed the answer is difficult. He further comments: "But this principle has only been put forward by the later philosophers of Islam."² Here Averroes does not seem to acknowledge this principle of gradual emanation, but later on in at-Tahāfut by stating that the immaterial principles ascend to God by a causal series his theory becomes identical with the theory he wants to refute.³ He denies explicitly that the theory of the philosophers of his religion, is the theory of the ancients. He says that Aristotle connects sensible existence with intelligible, saying that the world is one and proceeds from one, and that this Monad is partly the cause of the unity, partly the cause of plurality... This is the sense of Aristotle's theory, a sense very

¹At-Taha...p.173; cf. Maqa...p.218.

²At-Taha...p.173.

³Cf. Ibid. pp.178-79.

different from that in which those thinkers believe who affirm that from one only one can proceed. He says:

See for yourself in the books of the ancients whether these philosophical theories are proved, not in the works of Avicenna and others who changed the philosophical doctrine in its treatment of metaphysics so much that it became mere guessing.¹

Again, he says: "All these are inventions fabricated against the philosophers by Avicenna, Fārābī, and others." But when Averroes comes to the statement of al-Ghazālī that the Muslim philosophers affirm only suppositions and added obscurities to obscurities - he looses his temper and becomes vindictive. He says:

This is very much the way the ignorant treat the learned and the vulgar the eminent, and in this way, too, the common people behave towards the products of craftsmanship.²

Concerning Averroes' other objection that what al-Ghazālī mentions as the theory of the philosophers, is in fact, the individual opinion of Avicenna; and that al-Ghazālī exerts himself to refute him and his followers, in order to create the impression that he has

¹Ibid. (Eng.Tr.)p.109; Ara.p.182.

²Ibid. (Eng.Tr.)p.116; Ara.p.194.

refuted them all. According to Averroes, "this is acting like one who is in the depths of ignorance,"¹ As pointed out before, al-Ghazālī never undertook to refute the theories of other philosophers, but only those which emerge from the writings of these two. Averroes himself acknowledges that all the theories of Avicenna and his followers are not true and not built on the foundations of the philosophers'. But he takes another turn stating that they are not inept as this man says they are, nor does he represent them in a true light, for he has not reached the degree of knowledge necessary for comprehending the problem and the reason is that he studied only the books of Avicenna, and through this the deficiency in his knowledge arose. This statement of Averroes, again, is a distortion of the fact and it does not do justice to the richness of al-Ghazālī's thought.

Further, Averroes says, if he were asked what is his own position regarding his denial of Avicenna's theory of the cause of plurality; he would point out that the different schools of philosophy have different answers to this question. Some believe that plurality comes

¹Ibid.p.237.

through matter; while others hold that it comes through instruments; and still others believe that it comes through mediators. And it is said of the Aristotelians that they accept the theory which makes mediation the cause of plurality. He says, however, that this theory which is ascribed to Aristotle is not found in his works, nor in any of the known Aristotelians. His opinion is that according to the principles of the Aristotelians the cause of plurality is a combination of three factors, the intermediates, the dispositions, and the instruments; all these depend on the Monad and refer to it, for each of them exists through an absolute unity which is the cause of plurality. For it seems that the cause of the plurality of the separate intellects is the difference in their nature, by which they receive the knowledge they gain of the First Principle and which acquire from the First Principle a unity which by itself is one single act, but which becomes many through the plurality of the recipients, just as there are many deputies under the power of a king. He further says: "this we shall examine in another place, and if some part of it becomes clear it will suffice; otherwise we must take refuge in

revelation."¹ Thus in the final analysis Averroes submits to authority; whereas in the Harmony of Reason and Revelation, he believes more in the qualification of reason.²

The Third Disputation

Averroes accuses al-Ghazālī of inconsistency in advocating doctrine contradictory to his professed beliefs and subversive of Sunnism. Averroes says:

It appears from the books ascribed to him that in metaphysics he recurs to the philosophers. And of all his books this is most clearly shown and most truly proved in his book called Mishkāt al-anwār.³

Again, while mentioning how untrue is the proposition that one can produce only one, if it is understood in the way Avicenna and al-Fārābī understand it, Averroes points out "and Abu-Hamid himself in Mishkāt al-anwār, where he accepts this theory of the First Principle."⁴

¹Ibid.p.155 (Eng.Tr); Ara.p.260.

²Fasl.p.52.

³At-Taha...p.117.

⁴Ibid. pp,244-45.

Averroes further says:

Then he comes on with his book known as Mishkāt al-anwār, and mentions therein the grades of the knowers of Allāh; and says that all of them are veiled save those who believe that Allāh is not the mover of the First Heaven, He being the one from whom this mover of the first Heaven emanates: which is an open declaration on his part of the tenet of the philosophers' schools in the science of theology; though he has said in several places that their science of theology (but not their other sciences) is a set of conjecture.¹

This allegation that al-Ghazālī really held the same metaphysical views as the Muslim Neoplatonists respecting emanation is a most serious one. If it is so, the insincerity of his criticism is obvious, for he in his Tahāfut wrote pages to demonstrate the illogicality and falseness of the theory. But the charge of inconsistency against al-Ghazālī is ruled out when the authenticity of works attributed to al-Ghazali is strictly observed. Watt says:

The Veils-section is not the work of al-Ghazālī but a forgery either completing a work dealing only with the Light-verse or else substituted for the genuine Ghazalian interpretation of the Veils-tradition.²

¹c An Manāhij al-adillā ed. Muller, p. 71 (quoted by Gairdner in his art., 'Al-Ghazālī's Mishkāt & Ghazālī-Problem', Der Islam, 1914. V, p. 33.

² 'A Forgery in al-Ghazali's Mishkat?', JRAS, 1949. p. 5.

Watt further declares after a through investigation that nowhere in the later writings of al-Ghazālī can other¹ Neoplatonic doctrine be found.

Moreover, Averroes is not justified in ascribing to al-Ghazālī an adherence to the emanation doctrine on the strength of this passage, for Tahāfut is the book (as al-Ghazālī himself tells, in one of his last works al-Munqidh which was completed a year or two before his death) which represents the fruit of the special study and criticism of the philosophers and their doctrines.² Thus al-Ghazālī gives us clearly to understand that he stands by every one of the vital findings of the Tahāfut. He condemns outright the theory of emanation as it is incompatible with the doctrine of God as the Creator. It is wrong to ascribe to him that which he regarded as the first of the three heresies. Again, the discovery of Iljām al-^cawamm, (which was completed only a few days before his death)³ in which al-Ghazālī holds a position

¹Ibid. pp.5-22.

²Watt, W.M., 'Al-Ghazālī', EI.² p.1039.

³Ibid.

similar to that of the Ihyā', rules out the possibility that al-Ghazālī adopted extreme philosophical forms of Sūfism in his last years.

These investigations show clearly that these charges made against al-Ghazālī are baseless. He neither attacked the philosophers to please the religious circles nor, as Renan mentions,¹ did he write a pamphlet refuting all he had stated in the Tahāfut.

Conclusion

From the above survey of the Tahāfuts, the conclusion is that in none of the proofs for the eternity of the world - the determination of the will and in the immediate action of cause; the principle that time implies actual movement; the assumption that the world as a whole is eternal; and that possibility requires a substratum matter, which is eternal - have the philosophers, including Averroes, made out their case. They extend their axioms to such an extent that they are often involved in self-contradictions. In Tahāfut at-tahāfut it has been observed that often Averroes indirectly or

¹Cf. Averroes et L'Averroisme. Ch.2, part I, p.79.

perhaps unconsciously justifies al-Ghazālī's criticism by reproaching al-Fārābī and Avicenna saying that they fabricated inventions against the philosophers.

Averroes' other supposed objective statements that al-Ghazālī misinterpreted the theories of the philosophers⁹ or the allegations of inconsistency, are not based on any demonstrative proof. These allegations are falsified on the strong evidence of the richness of al-Ghazālī's thought and on the basis of the authenticity of the works attributed to him.

General Conclusion

The investigation of the doctrine of creation in al-Ghazālī and Averroes, and the comparison with which the preceding chapter concluded, has perhaps succeeded in clarifying the theological and the philosophical sides of the thought of each of these thinkers, or at least made it distinguishable from each aspect of their thought. Al-Ghazālī and Averroes followed two divergent trends, and their theological and philosophical thought was, on the whole, shaped by different concerns - namely, al-Ghazālī supported mainly the doctrine of the Ash^carites or, more generally, of Ahl as-Sunna; Averroes' approach is mainly Aristotelian, and ^{he} stands out against al-Ghazālī in having formulated a problem of eternal becoming. The theory of the eternity of the world is an Aristotelian one. Aristotle holds at the same time that time and movement are infinite and that every causal series must be finite. The contradiction in Aristotle is further accentuated in Muslim philosophy by the fact that the Muslim philosophers see in God, not only as Aristotle did, the First Mover of the movement of the universe, but they regard Him, under the influence of the Neo-platonic theory of emanation, as the Creator of the

universe from whom the world emanates eternally.

Al-Ghazālī attacks this emanational world-view for its being in opposition to the theistic voluntarian Sunnites' world-view. Averroes relied in the ability of reason to comprehend the ultimate secrets of the universe.

Al-Ghazālī, though ^{he} accepts in principle all the rational sources of knowledge, ~~but~~ firmly holds that reason does not cover the whole truth. According to him, every sensible statement can only be justified as true in one of two ways: Either one knows it analytically, by simply understanding the meaning of one's language, as in definitions; or it must be justified by some empirical observation. One can know nothing about the real world by supposed axioms of reason. The conclusion which one is to draw about the world is that the statement: "The world is eternal", is meaningful being synthetic; and the opposite statement: "The world is originated", is equally meaningful and synthetic. Now, both the statements are being conceived as true. How then is it possible to decide which really is true? There is no empirical evidence, since pre-history, geology, and astronomy do not take us back to a known beginning

of things. The arguments which employ axioms of reason are also worthless, for when one examines the axioms one finds that they are either analytic statements giving no new information about the empirical world; or synthetic statements about the world which have to be supported by empirical observation, the only kind of support that can justify such statements. Any claim that such axioms are known by intuition simply breaks down when someone denies the intuition, and claims the opposite assertion as conceivable and possibly true. Thus, one lacks any rational way of finding out whether the world is eternal or originated, though ^{one} it must in fact be one or the other.

Now when/tries to understand the attitude and approach of the Muslim philosophers and that of al-Ghazālī, one finds that the former followed the somewhat dogmatic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy, mixed with some Neoplatonic ideas. They have followed dogmatic tradition at least in the sense of their acceptance of a number of axioms of reason over and above the principles of logic. For them, the Qur'ān is of course a source of truth. Everything in it is true, when it is correctly interpreted, and the major truths about the world are all contained

in the Qur'ān or Traditions in one place or another. But all these truths can also be known independently by rational methods. In the Qur'ān the literal meaning often conceals the demonstrative truth from the masses. This is at least the position of Averroes. For al-Ghazālī, the Qur'ān and Traditions hold a more essential place as a source of truth. In his opinion, rational sources leave gaps in the knowledge of the world, and these gaps are filled by revelation - the Qur'ān and Traditions. It gives us knowledge of the world that one could never have discovered for oneself.

Thus one can see that behind the attitude of the Muslim philosophers and al-Ghazālī, there are different emotional attachments - the philosophers to Aristotle and the rest of the philosophic heritage; al-Ghazālī to the Qur'ān and the Traditions. These attachments provide the background which helps us to understand why they held to the positions with regard to the doctrine of creation.

List of Abbreviations

-	<u>The Qur'an</u>	= <u>Qur.</u>
Al-Fārābī:	<u>Arā' ahl al-Madīnat al-Fādila .</u>	= <u>Fārā Tx.</u>
Al-Ghazālī:	<u>Ihyā' ^CUlūm ad-Dīn .</u>	= <u>Ihyā'.</u>
-	<u>Al-Iqtisād fī-'l-I^Ctiqād .</u>	= <u>Iqti.</u>
-	<u>Maqāsid al-Falāsifa .</u>	= <u>Maqa.</u>
-	<u>Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā Sharh Asmā'</u> <u>Allāh al-Husnā.</u>	= <u>Maqṣad.</u>
-	<u>Tahafut al-Falasifa .</u>	= <u>Taha.</u>
Al-Juwaynī:	<u>Al-Irshād .</u>	= <u>Irsh.</u>
Ibn-Rushd :	<u>Faṣl al-Maqāl .</u>	= <u>Faṣl.</u>
-	<u>^CAn Manāhiḥ al-adilla.</u>	= <u>Manāhiḥ.</u>
-	<u>Tahāfut at-tahāfut.</u>	= <u>At-Taha.</u>
Ibn-Sīnā :	<u>Al-Ishārāt wa-t Tanbihāt .</u>	= <u>Ishra.</u>
Az-Zamakhsharī:	<u>Al-kashāf ^Can Haqā'iq at-</u> <u>Tanzīl.</u>	= <u>al-kash.</u>

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